

The Standards Committee Work/Action Plan up to 31 March 2015

This Action Plan was monitored by the Committee at each meeting..

The Standards Committee is responsible for the Authority's statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members. The Committee has worked to discharge this duty by undertaking the following actions:

Action	Why	By When	Status/Suggested action
1. Monitor the operation of the new Members' Code of Conduct.	To ensure that it is operating effectively.	Ongoing.	Continue with monitoring.
2. To continue to develop an on going programme of meetings with invited guests, including the Elected Mayor, the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Group Leaders, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council and the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee.	To develop a dialogue between the Committee, and members and appropriate Officers relating to ethical governance and ethical standards.	Ongoing.	Continue to develop the programme. Most of the invited guests have attended the Committee. Invitations have been sent out and responses are being co-ordinated in relation to attendance at future meetings of the Committee.
3. To provide training for the Committee on relevant ethical standards issues.	Training on local assessment, the Code of Conduct and other relevant matters/legislation.	Ongoing.	Continue to provide the required training.

Action	Why	By When	Status/Suggested action
4. To review training available to all Council Members on ethical governance, ethical standards issues including arrangements with respect to the Code of Conduct; granting of dispensations, the use of Social Media and declaring interests.	To ensure all members receive information on ethical governance, ethical standards to minimise risk of unwitting breaches of the Code of Conduct.	September 2014. Results of a survey detailing Members views of the current training provision was presented to the meeting of the Committee in June 2014. The results of that feedback has been used to review the available training.	Training provided has been reviewed and updated and more e-learning is now provided.
5. Continue production of Annual Standards Committee Report.	Presentation of Annual Report of the work of the Committee during the previous 12 months.	By end of each municipal year.	Continue with production of Annual Report.
6. Encourage the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Standards Committees to meeting in a regional forum.	To facilitate a dialogue and discussion about ethical governance and the application of the Code of Conduct for Members.	4 July 2014 hosted by Northumberland County Council and 13 March 2015 hosted by Durham County Council.	Events held. Discussions on a number of topics associated with the operation of the Code of Conduct were undertaken.

Action	Why	By When	Status/Suggested action
7. To provide training to the Independent Persons on their role.	To ensure that the Authority's Independent Persons understand their role in relation to ethical governance and the Code of Conduct for Members.	November 2014.	Training event held to discuss the role of the Independent Person.  Continually review with the Independent Persons and provision of training as a result.
8. To review the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with Complaints under the Code of Conduct.	To ensure that the Authority's Local Arrangements meet the requirements and expectations of the Members and the relevant legislation.	November 2014.	Completed and the amendments to the Local Arrangements were approved by full Council in November 2014.