

Standards Committee



Date	2 September 2009
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Mr DDE Birchall (Chairman) Councillors Brenda Ackers, Kevin Eastham, Paul Hayhurst Harold Butler, Glynn Driver, Roy Male, Alan Marsh, Richard Nulty
Officers	Ian Curtis, Christopher Kitchen

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 20 May 2009 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitute members.

4. Standards for England Corporate Plan 2009-12

The Committee considered the Corporate Plan which had been published by Standards for England. The Corporate Plan set out its objectives, work and priorities for 2009-12.

The Corporate Plan identified three objectives for the organisation during 2009-12 that are:

- Be a respected strategic regulator adding value to local governance
- Ensure the local standards framework is a success
- Continue to improve our business capability and effectiveness

The Corporate Plan also envisaged Standards for England taking a greater interest in wider issues of corporate governance systems.

The Committee discussed aspects of the Corporate Plan. Some members considered that the standards machinery was disproportionate to the problems it was intended to deal with.

Following the discussion, the Committee RESOLVED to note the Standards for England Corporate Plan.

5. Complaints to the Standards Committee: Statistics

Ian Curtis (Monitoring Officer) reported that three complaints had been made to the Standards Committee since the Committee's previous meeting in May.

Following discussion the Committee RESOLVED to note the statistical information.

6. Local Investigations

Ian Curtis (Monitoring Officer) presented a report that set out the status of the eight matters that had been referred for investigation by the Committee since the introduction of local filtering.

The Committee's expressed concerns regarding the length of time it took to complete an investigation. The Committee deemed it unsatisfactory that a complainant or subject member should have to wait for up to six months for an outcome.

The Committee suggested that an acceptable timeframe would be one month to carry out the initial assessment and a further four months to complete the investigation should it be referred.

Following discussion the Committee RESOLVED to ask the Monitoring Officer to prepare a report to the Council setting out the concerns of the committee.

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