

Standards Committee

Annual Report

“The aim of setting up a standards committee is to create a sense of well-being in the council, to increase confidence in local democracy and to improve the image of local government”

(Guidance from the Standards Board for England)

May 2010

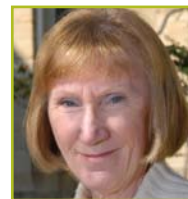
Independent Members



**Group Captain
Phil Rodgers**
(Chairman)



Mr George Krawiec
(Vice-Chairman)



Mrs Carol Lloyd



Mr Richard (Alan) Daff



Mr Jon Hanna

Elected Members



Councillor
Mrs Marianne Overton



Councillor
David Dickinson



Councillor
Howard Johnson



Councillor
Neville Jackson



Councillor
Ray Sellars

Foreword

This is my third and final report on behalf of the Standards Committee, so it would seem appropriate to review the Committee's achievements over the last three years. The period under review began with the Council's adoption on the New Model Code of Conduct on 25 June 2007, and the consequent Member Training Programme that was sponsored and supported by the Committee.

At the same time, the Standards Committee adopted a Work Programme that set out its aims and objectives, and an Action Plan, which enabled its progress to be measured and monitored. Two Working Groups were set up: one to deal with Training and Development and the other to deal with Processes and Procedures. By the end of the year an Ethical Handbook had been produced for Members, and an Ethical Framework had been posted on the Council's Website.

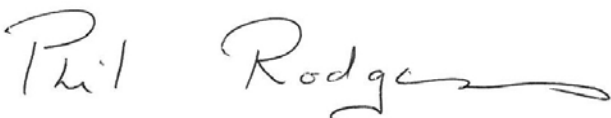
In the meantime, the County Council responded to a request from District Council colleagues by becoming host to meetings of a Network of Chairmen of the Lincolnshire Standards Committees, which subsequently evolved into joint meetings with the county's Monitoring Officers.

In 2008, these training and joint working initiatives received national recognition when Lincolnshire County Council became one of the six finalists in of the Local Government Chronicle Standards and Ethics Award.

In May 2008 responsibility for the investigation of complaints relating to the Code of Conduct devolved from the Standards Board for England to local Standards Committees; and, at the same time, Standards Committees were charged with responsibility for dealing with requests from council employees for exemption from political restrictions. A few weeks later, the County Council became one of the first authorities in the country to deal with this new legislation.

In 2009, the Council was given further recognition when it was invited to make a twofold contribution to the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees. The Executive Director for Resources and Community Safety was invited to address the Assembly on the improvements made in ethical governance, and the Chairman of the Standards Committee was invited to lead a workshop on Member Training in the Code of Conduct.

It has been an active and interesting three year period, during which the Council has demonstrated its commitment to ethical governance, and this has been recognised by its peers and the public alike. Long may it continue.



Group Captain P J Rodgers MBE FRAeS RAF (Retd)
Chairman, Lincolnshire County Council Standards Committee

Introduction

1 This is the fifth Annual Report from the Standards Committee of Lincolnshire County Council. It covers the period from May 2009 to May 2010.

2 The Standards Committee consists of five Councillors (elected members) and five Independent (non-elected) Members. Of the Councillor members of the Committee, two are from the Ruling Group and there is one member from each of the three Opposition groups. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are Independent Members, and are appointed by the Committee, in an open ballot, at its first meeting of the Council Year.

3 The requirement for a Standards Committee was placed upon local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. This legislation arose from the work of Lord Nolan who presented a report to the Government in 1997 entitled "Standards in Public Life". In the report he spoke of the bond of trust between Councils and their local community, and expressed the need for the conduct of everyone in local government to be of the highest standard.

4 On 6 November 2001, the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001 was laid before Parliament, and it came into force on 27 November 2001. Authorities had until 5 May 2002 to adopt the Code of Conduct. After that date the Model Code of Conduct 2001 was automatically applied. A new Model Code of Conduct was laid before Parliament on 4 April 2007 and came into force on 3 May 2007. Authorities had until 1 October 2007 to adopt this Revised Code of Conduct 2007; but Lincolnshire County Council adopted the new Code at a Meeting of the County Council on 29 June 2007. The Code of Conduct covers areas of individual behaviour such as members not abusing their position or bringing their office or authority into disrepute, and not misusing their authority's resources. In addition, there are rules covering handling confidential information as well as registering and disclosing interests, including withdrawal from meetings where members have relevant interests.

5 Since its inception, the Standards Committee has been required to assist Councillors and non-elected members in the observation of the Members' Code of Conduct. It was formerly required to deal with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board for England to the Monitoring Officer. In 2008 the role of the Standards Board changed, and as a result the role and responsibilities of the Standards Committee changed.

6 The Standards Board for England was set up under the Local Government Act 2000 to investigate complaints of breaches by elected and non-elected members of their authority's Code of Conduct. Originally, investigations were the responsibility of Ethical Standards Officers. After investigation, an Ethical Standards Officer could refer a matter to the Monitoring Officer for reference to a Standards Committee, or a case tribunal of the Adjudication Panel for England. The Standards Committee was required to deal with minor breaches of the Code, whilst the Adjudication Panel has been concerned with more serious matters, and able to impose sanctions of up to a five year disqualification from office.

7 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act received Royal Assent on 30 October 2007. This Act made important amendments to the Local Government Act 2000, including (under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008) the introduction, in May 2008, of a locally-managed framework of compliance with the Code of Conduct and a new regulatory role for the Standards Board for England. The 2008 Regulations also dealt with matters involving the composition of a local standards committee and the use of sub-committees to deal with the local assessment, review and determination of complaints.

8 Since then, local standards committees have carried out initial assessments of misconduct allegations, and in practice most cases have been handled locally.

9 In July 2009 the Standards Board for England was re-branded as Standards for England and now provides supervision, support and guidance for local authorities, and it also aims to ensure a degree of consistency in the application of the Code. It has an increasingly important role in monitoring the performance of local standards committees.

10 A First-tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England) has taken over from a judicial tribunal established by the Local Government Act 2000 to determine references and appeals about the conduct of members of local authorities.

11 The Act set up an ethical governance framework designed to maintain high standards of behaviour for members of local authorities and associated bodies. All relevant authorities are required to adopt a Code of Conduct; the minimum requirements being laid down in a statutory Model Code. Failure to comply with the Code can lead to a member being suspended or disqualified.

12 From 18 January 2010 this work was transferred to the First-tier Tribunal as part of the work of the General Regulatory Chamber.

13 Proceedings are governed by The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (General Regulatory) Rules 2009.

14 Appeals from our decisions must be made to the Upper Tribunal. Permission shall first be sought from the Principal Judge of the First-tier Tribunal.

Committee Members

15 Among the Elected Members **Councillor David Dickinson**, **Councillor Howard Johnson** and **Councillor Mrs Marianne Overton** continued to serve on the Committee, and they were joined by **Councillor Neville Jackson** and **Councillor Ray Sellers**. They were appointed at the beginning of the Council Year, when they replaced **Councillor Paul Goodale** and **Councillor Oswald Snell**, who were not returned

following the Council Election in May 2009. The departing Members had both been keen supporters of the Committee, and are owed a debt of gratitude.

16 Among the Independent Members, **Mr Alan Daff**, **Mr George Krawiec**, **Mrs Carol Lloyd** and **Group Captain Phil Rodgers MBE** continued to serve on the Committee, and they were joined in 2009 by **Mr Jon Hanna**, who has been appointed until May 2012.

Committee Meetings

17 During Council Year 2009/2010, the Standards Committee held four meetings for the conduct of business, with a fifth meeting, in February 2010, being given over to training.

13 July 2009. Group Captain Rodgers was re-elected Chairman, and Mr Krawiec was re-elected Vice-Chairman. The Head of Corporate Standards reported that the results of a staff survey on ethical governance had shown that there was a need to raise the profile of the committee and to promote an understanding of its role and remit. Attention was then drawn to the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009, which had come into force on 15 June 2009.

19 October 2009. The Chairman referred to the recent death of former Councillor Roger Hiscox, who had been a member of the Committee, and members stood in silent tribute. The meeting was attended by Mrs Jennifer Rogers, an Ethical Standards Officer from Standards for England, who gave a presentation on 'Other Action' at the conclusion of the Meeting. During the meeting there was discussion on the regulations that came into force on 15 June 2009, particularly the provisions for a Joint Standards Committee that could serve a group of authorities.

18 January 2010. The Head of Corporate Standards reported that there was little support for a Joint Standards Committee, in Lincolnshire. Instead, it was suggested that there should be a pool of Standards Committee Independent Members who could be drawn upon to serve on sub-committees, as and when the need arose. The Head of Corporate Standards then drew attention to an article on the Standards for England Website, which stated that Independent Members of Standards Committees could not be automatically appointed for a second term; but may apply for reappointment when the post was publicly advertised.

19 April 2010. A discussion took place on the question of the process for re-appointing independent members and the periods for any initial appointment and re-appointment. These matters were adjourned to 19 July 2010 to consider the relevant issues in more detail. A Standards Training and Development Manual was agreed by the Committee, as was a set of guidelines for dealing with the media. The Head of Corporate Standards also brought the Committee up to date with some key subjects from the Standards for England's website, including its Regulatory Statement and its Annual Review as well as some recent cases.

Training and Development

18 It had been widely anticipated that a further revision to the Code of Conduct would be announced and implemented during the course of the year. This would have clarified how the Code dealt with the conduct of Members in their private lives. The Committee was prepared to hold training sessions along the lines of the programme that they introduced in 2007; but the legislation was not placed before Parliament and no changes were announced. Instead, the Committee was called upon to support the induction training for new and returning members, after the council election, in May 2009. With 36 new members, training took place on 11 and 12 June and 13 July 2009.

19 The training needs of newly appointed Independent Members of the Committee were not overlooked. It had previously been acknowledged

that these Members would probably be unfamiliar with the operations of local government. Therefore, and in accordance with the guidance published by the Standards for England, there was a need for fast-track induction so that Independent/Non-Elected Members can participate effectively in the work of the Standards Committee. The Training and Development Working Group has therefore drawn up a Training and Development Manual. It provides for induction training on Standards for New Councillors and for New Independent Members of the Standards Committee. There is then further training for Members of the Standards Committee, and further sections of the manual deal with continuation training.

20 Continuation training for Committee Members was arranged for Committee Members on 19 October 2009, which was attended by members of other Lincolnshire Standards Committees. Guidance on a process known as 'Other Action' had been published in May 2009, and an Ethical Standards Officer from Standards for England had been invited to explain the process. Those in attendance were reminded that an assessment sub-committee had three options when dealing with a complaint that a Member had failed or may have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. The options were to refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer, refer it to Standards for England, or take no action. If the assessment sub-committee decided to refer a complaint to the Monitoring Officer, it could direct them to investigate the matter. Alternatively, it could direct them to take steps other than carrying out an investigation. This was known as 'Other Action'. Generally, there were two indicators for 'Other Action'. The first was when there was evidence of poor understanding of the Code of Conduct and/or the authority's procedures. The second indicator for other action is when relationships within the authority as a whole have broken down to such an extent that it becomes very difficult to conduct the business of the council. In summary, 'Other Action' goes beyond the individual and addresses systemic failure.

21 As has become customary, the February meeting of the Committee was made over to training, and the Head of Corporate Standards ran a workshop on bias and predetermination, with particular reference to overlaps with the Member Code of Conduct.

Process and Procedures

Liaison with Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

22 On 20 October 2008, the Standards Committee received a protocol for working with the Audit Committee. However, this initiative had already been overtaken by events, because a new approach to corporate governance had been outlined at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees earlier that same month. The new approach added the work of scrutiny committees to that of the standards and audit committees in order to achieve more effective and better co-ordinated working between the main non-executive bodies in local authorities. Work therefore began on a new three-way protocol. The revised protocol was presented to a joint meeting of the committee chairmen, on 10 December 2009. The protocol was further revised and reviewed at a joint meeting of committee chairmen and vice-chairmen, on 16 April 2010.

Standards Committee Protocol

23 In December 2005, the Standards Committee produced a 'Protocol on Independent Representatives', which was reviewed and revised by the Processes and Procedures Working Group for adoption by the Committee on 21 January 2008. The Minutes of the meeting and Protocol itself were presented to Council on 15 February 2008. Since then, this Protocol has been taken forward as the basis for a new, wider Protocol covering all non-elected members of the Council (including added or co-opted member such as parent and church governor representatives and Audit Committee independent members). The protocol sets out the mutual rights and responsibilities of both the Council and the independent members in matters such as training, the provision of communications equipment, and administrative and clerical support, as well as rules relating to appointment and terms of office.

Guidelines for Dealing with the Media

24 On 19 April 2010 the Standards Committee adopted a paper that presented guidelines for dealing with the media. Its purpose was to ensure a clear and consistent approach to handling media enquiries about the role and work of the Committee and allegations relating to the Member Code of Conduct.

Inspecting the Register of Member Interests

25 The Committee inspected the Register of Members Interests on 8 December 2009. Members were informed that this inspection was to be carried At a Council Meeting on 4 December 2009. Although most of the interest forms were completed correctly, there were a number of common omissions and errors, namely:-

- No full home address
- No or incomplete details of landholdings
- No or incomplete details of political party membership
- No or incomplete details of receipts of financial help from political parties
- No or incomplete details of bodies in which a member has an interest

Support for the Standards Committee

Officer Support

26 Standards for England suggest that Independent/Non-Elected Members should have ongoing access to, and advice from, the Monitoring Officer and other Council Officers, and support from administrative staff to prepare correspondence and organize meetings. The recommended levels of support are available and indeed three senior officers of the Council (the Assistant Chief Executive as Monitoring Officer, the Assistant Director of Resources (Commercial & Legal) as a formal Deputy Monitoring Officer, and the Head of Corporate Standards), are involved on either a day to day or advisory basis with the Committee. At least one of these officers also attends all meetings of the Committee.

Further Guidance

27 With regard to Independent/Non-Elected Members, the Council is compliant with Standards for England guidance on the following:

- Allowing them to observe Members and Officers performing their duties;
- Enabling them to observe public meetings and committee meetings;
- Providing regular updates on the authority's work and the issues that affect it;
- Providing access to documents, information and buildings relevant to the performance of their duties as Standards Committee members;
- Providing financial support such as allowances or the means to attend relevant training or conferences;
- Allowing them to pursue their responsibilities free from political interference.

Annual Assembly of Standards Committee

28 Under the heading of "Bringing Standards into Focus", the Eighth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees took place in the International Convention Centre, in Birmingham, on 12-13 October 2009. The Lincolnshire County Council delegation included Councillor Neville Jackson, Councillor Mrs Marianne Overton, Mrs Carol Lloyd, Mr George Krawiec and the Head of Corporate Standards.

29 Standards for England had invited the Committee Chairman, Group Captain Phil Rodgers, to be a member of the Conference Steering Committee, and subsequently invited him to lead a workshop entitled 'Train the Trainer'. Aimed at Standards Committee members, the presentation described the training, on standards and ethics that Lincolnshire Standards Committees were providing for Members and Officers, in the County, Districts and Parishes.

30 Mr Pete Moore, Executive Director for Resources and Community Safety was also invited to take part in the Assembly as a speaker. In a plenary session, described as 'On the Brink', delegates were told of the experiences of local authorities that had recovered from "ethical collapse", and considered what role high standards had played in getting them back on track.

Co-operation with other Standards Committees

Network of Chairmen of Standards Committees in Lincolnshire

31 The County Council continued to act as host authority for all meetings of the Network of Chairmen of Standards Committees in Lincolnshire, and the County Council's Standards Committee Chairman continued to act as the ex-officio Network Chairman. The Network has no policy development role and cannot bind its constituent authorities; but it is a very useful body for sharing good practice, offering mutual support and advice, as well as helping to prepare the agenda for the annual Lincolnshire Standards Forum. As in previous years, the main business of the Network was taken up with issues around joint working, joint training and a consistent and shared approach to recruiting, training and the remuneration of independent members. Network meetings were held on 17 June 2009, 15 December 2009, and 18 March 2010.

Lincolnshire Monitoring Officers Group

32 The Lincolnshire Monitoring Officers Group works closely with the Network of Chairmen and occasionally meets separately to discuss more technical and legal issues in the standards arena which, if appropriate or necessary, are then referred onto the Network of Chairmen. The County Council's representative on this Group is the Head of Corporate Standards who also chairs the Group's meetings. As with the Network of Chairmen, the Group always meets at County Offices in Lincoln.

Lincolnshire Standards Forum

33 Following the tradition of rotating the host for the Lincolnshire Standards Forum around the county, the Annual Forum was hosted by East Lindsey District Council, on 23 September 2009. The facilitator was Mr Stuart Binks, the Independent Chairman of the East Lindsey Standards Committee. The first speaker was Mr Storm Westmaas, who gave an update on Standards for England, and Mr Richard Enderby described the work of the Adjudication Panel

for England. The keynote speaker was Mr Andrew Neville, who was the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for Rossendale. Rossendale were the winners of the 2009 Local Government Chronicle Award for Standards and Ethics. The 2010 Forum is due to be hosted by West Lindsey District Council.

Civic Events

34 In order to elevate the standing of the Standards Committee, and to facilitate communication with members of the public, the Council invited Independent Members to attend the Lincolnshire Show, on 24/25 June 2009, in support of Elected Members and Officers. The Council then invited Independent Members to the Civic Service in Lincoln Cathedral, on 12 July 2009, and afterwards to a reception in the Castle Grounds.

Conclusion

35 During this first year of a new Council, the Standards Committee was fully involved in the induction training for new and retuning Members. For much of the year, it was expected that Central Government would produce a further revision to the Member Code of Conduct; but this was not forthcoming. The Committee therefore concerned itself with the production of a Training and Development Manual, and with the development and revision of protocols and procedures for ethical governance. Last year, the Council was nominated as one of the six finalists in the Local Government Chronicle Awards. This year, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Hill OBE, won an award as Council Leader of the Year, and the Standards Committee is pleased to offer its warmest congratulations on this outstanding achievement.

Appendix A - Standards Committee Work Programme 2009-10

Appendix B - Standards Committee Action Plan 2009-10

Appendix A - STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME MAY 2009 - MAY 2010

No	Activity	Responsibility Date	Start Date	Due	Links to Article 8	Notes/ Comments
1	<i>Attendance by Committee Members at both formal public LCC meetings and external events (eg- Annual Assembly; Standards Forum, Lincs. Show) and informal/private events (such as Chairman's Dinner)</i>	Committee Members	On going		8.03 paragraphs (a), (d) & (n)	Aims are to raise the profile of the Committee and for Independent Members to gain an understanding of how LCC functions
2	<i>Maintenance of document to monitor progress on delivery of work programme - Action Plan</i>	Chairman/Head of Corporate Standards	On going		8.03 paragraphs (a) & (n)	There would be a report on progress against the Plan to every SC meeting
3	<i>Develop & Manage on-going training for members and relevant officers on the revised Member Code of Conduct and introduce informal training sessions for Committee after each formal meeting</i>	Working Group/ Head of Democratic Services/Head of Corporate Standards	July 2009	Oct 2009	8.03 paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (e) & (n)	Will be urgent when revised Code is published To be part of Member Development Programme To be part of Employee Development Plans
4	<i>Continuing Inspection of Register of Member Interests</i>	Committee Members/Head of Corporate Standards	On going		8.03 paragraphs (a), (b) & (d)	Aim is to ensure consistency not to catch members out
5	<i>Develop Three- Way Protocol with Audit Committee and Scrutiny bodies</i>	Chairmen of Audit, Standards & Scrutiny Committees/Head of Internal Audit/Head of Corporate Standards/Head of Democratic Services	July 2009	Dec 2009 (draft to Committee Meeting)	8.03 paragraphs (a) & (n)	Good practice & should enhance corporate governance at LCC

No	Activity	Responsibility Date	Start Date	Due	Links to Article 8	Notes/ Comments
6	<i>Promote and monitor "ethical dimension" in member training and development</i>	Working Group/Head of Democratic Services/Head of Corporate Standards	On going		8.03 paragraphs (a), (b), (d) & (e)	Will need to complement existing training objectives such as promoting diversity & equality and effective decision making
7	<i>Participate in Ethical Governance Review of LCC</i>	Committee Members/ Head of Democratic Services/Head of Corporate Standards	Jan 2010	May 2010	8.03 paragraphs (a), (b), (d), (e) & (n)	Aim would be to involve as wide a cross section of members and officers as possible in the review
8	<i>If requested, give advice/ make recommendations for one or more joint standards committees in the county</i>	Working Group/ Monitoring Officer/ Head of Corporate Standards	July 2009	Mar 2010	8.03 paragraphs (a), (l) & (n)	2009 Regulations permit JSCs
9	<i>Consider whether to set up standing sub-committees to deal with the local assessment process</i>	Working Group/ Monitoring Officer/ Head of Corporate Standards	July 2009	Dec 2009	8.03 paragraphs (a), (d) & (l)	SBE guidance recommends setting up Standing Sub-Committees to consider investigations and/ or hear complaints
10	<i>Develop media protocol for dealing with enquiries about complaints</i>	Working Group/ Monitoring Officer/ Head of Corporate Standards/Head of Communications	July 2009	Oct 2009	8.03 paragraphs (a), (b), (l) & (n)	Media Protocol common and could be useful

Appendix B - STANDARDS COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN COUNCIL YEAR 2009-2010

Action By	Planned Course of Action	Office of Primary Responsibility	Complete
Week Ending 23 May 09	22 May - County Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Standards Committee Minutes (20/4) 	Chief Executive Committee Chairman	22/5
Week Ending 13 Jun 09	9 Jun – Independent Member Selection Panel	Head of Corporate Standards	9/6
Week Ending 20 Jun 09	17 Jun – Joint Meeting Chairmen of Lincolnshire Standards Committees and Lincolnshire Monitoring Officers	Chairman Vice-Chairman Head of Corporate Standards	17/6
	19 Jun - County Council Meeting Present Standards Committee Annual Report (08/09)	Chief Executive Committee Chairman	19/6
Week Ending 27 Jun 09	25/26 Jun – Lincolnshire Show	Council Members and Officers	25/6 - 26/6
Week Ending 18 Jul 09	13 Jul - Standards Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elect Chairman Elect Vice-Chairman 	Head of Corporate Standards	13/7
Week Ending 25 Jul 09	22 Jul – Independent Member Selection Panel	Head of Corporate Standards	22/7
Week Ending 19 Sep 09	18 Sep - County Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Standards Committee Minutes (13/7) 	Chief Executive Committee Chairman	19/9
Week Ending 26 Sep 09	23 Sep – Lincolnshire Standards Forum	ELDC	23/9
Week Ending 17 Oct 09	12/13 Oct - Annual Assembly 2009	Monitoring Officer	12-13/10
Week Ending 24 Oct 09	19 Oct - Standards Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports From Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Training & Development (WG1) o Processes & Procedures (WG2) 	Committee Chairman WG Spokesman WG Spokesman	19/10
Week Ending 5 Dec 09	4 Dec - County Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Standards Committee Minutes (19/10) 	Chief Executive Committee Chairman	4/12
Week Ending 12 Dec 09	9 Dec – Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training & Development (WG1) Processes & Procedures (WG2) Inspection of Member's Register of Interests 	Chairman Vice-Chairman Head of Corporate Standards	9/12

Action By	Planned Course of Action	Office of Primary Responsibility	Complete
Week Ending 19 Dec 09	15 Dec – Joint Meeting Chairmen of Lincolnshire Standards Committees and Lincolnshire Monitoring Officers	Chairman Vice Chairman Head of Corporate Standards	15/12
Week Ending 23 Jan 10	18 Jan - Standards Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports From Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Training & Development (WG1) o Processes & Procedures (WG2) 	Committee Chairman WG Spokesman WG Spokesman	18/1
Week Ending 13 Feb 10	12 Feb - County Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Standards Committee Minutes (18/1) 	Chief Executive Committee Chairman	12/2
Week Ending 20 Feb 10	15 Feb - Standards Committee Training	Committee Chairman/ Head of Corporate Standards	15/2
Week Ending 6 Mar 10	5 Mar – Training & Development (WG1)	Chairman	5/3
Week Ending 13 Mar 10			
Week Ending 20 Mar 10	18 Mar – Joint Meeting Chairmen of Lincolnshire Standards Committees and Lincolnshire Monitoring Officers	Chairman Vice Chairman Head of Corporate Standards	
Week Ending 10 Apr 10	6 Apr - Processes & Procedures (WG2)	Vice-Chairman	6/4
Week Ending 17 Apr 10	16 Apr – Joint Meeting with Chairmen of the Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	Head of Corporate Standards	16/4
Week Ending 24 Apr 10	19 Apr - Standards Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final reports from Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Training & Development (WG1) o Processes & Procedures (WG2) • Establish Two Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Draft Work Programme for 2010/11 (WG1) o Draft Annual Report to the Council for 2009/10 (WG2) 	Committee Chairman	19/4
Week Ending 22 May 10	21 May - County Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards Committee Appointments & Reappointments • Present Standards Committee Annual Report (09/10) • Present Standards Committee Minutes (19/4) 	Chief Executive Standards Champion Committee Chairman Committee Chairman	

(Extract from Standards for England Standards Update- Spring 2010)

Standards matter to local government

- The Code of Conduct is widely accepted within local government. **94%** of members and officers support the requirement that members should sign up to the Code of Conduct*.
- **81%** of local government officers and members believe that high standards of behaviour for members is one of the most important issues facing local government*.
- In 2009, **92%** of town and parish members agree with the requirement for their members to sign up to the Code of Conduct. This has increased from **69%** in 2004*.
- **88%** of elected members would support the requirement for officers to sign a Code of Conduct*.
- Standards matter to the electorate. Over half of complaints received come from members of the public.

* Source: BMG Research Stakeholder Tracker 2009 (Satisfaction with the Standards Board for England and Attitudes to the Ethical Environment)

(Extract from Standards for England Standards Update- Spring 2010)

The **local standards** framework so far

- The Code of Conduct and the Standards Board for England were introduced in the 2000 Local Government Act, in response to the Nolan report and high profile standards failings in local government.
- In the early days, flaws in both legislation and administration attracted criticism, particularly from local government. We agreed with the need for improvement and led the call for changes to the system, lobbying for a more proportionate balance between local self regulation and national oversight.
- The 2007 Local Government Act brought in a remodelled local standards framework. The new devolved regime has been up and running since May 2008. The vast majority of complaints are now dealt with by local standards committees. We only deal with the most serious.
- Our monitoring reports from England's authorities shows that local experience of dealing with cases is growing and that the system is well established.
- There were 4432 complaints received locally from 8 May 2008 to 30 September 2009. 55% were made by members of the public. 35% were from elected members, 3% were from council officers and 3% were from town or parish clerks.
- The system allows tit-for-tat and vexatious complaints to be weeded out early on. Over half of the local cases received from 8 May 2008 to 30 September 2009 were dismissed at initial assessment.
- The most frequent breaches being investigated are failure to treat others with respect, bringing the authority into disrepute, failure to declare personal interests and prejudicial interests.
- We expect the number of most serious cases, leading to suspensions or disqualifications, will remain small. There were 15 in 2008-09. However the system offers a number of other remedies and sanctions aimed at highlighting behaviour and improving standards, including directions to take action to solve local problems, such as training and mediation.

