

Chairman's Introduction

"This report has been produced to give Members of the Police Authority and the wider public an overview of the work of the Standards Committee during 2010. The Committee fulfils a vital role in ensuring the maintenance of high standards in public life and compliance with the Code of Conduct and I trust that this report will give you a flavour of the progress made over the last year in the Authority". Helen Waller, Chairman

Membership

The membership of the Committee during 2010 is set out below:-

Police Authority Members	Independent Members
David Cargill	Helen Waller (Chairman)
Emily Lam	Darren Willetts
Brian Maher	Harry Mawdsley
Terry Savage	

Future of Standards Regime

The Coalition Government has announced its intentions to abolish the current 'Standards Board regime'. It is proposed to remove the national code of conduct and the requirement to have Standards Committees. Instead, it will be for Authorities to choose whether they wish to have a local code and Standards Committee. Any local Committee would no longer have the power to suspend a Member. There would also be a new criminal offence created relating to failure to register or declare interests.

These proposals will require new legislation to be introduced. In the meantime, the Committee will continue operating under the existing framework.

Committee activity

The Standards Committee met on two occasions during the year.

The first meeting in June considered: an update on key standards issues; the annual report in relation to Members attendance at the Authority's meetings; the annual report on the payment of Members' allowances and expenses; and a review of Member's compliance with the attendance requirement.

The second meeting of the Committee took place in December, when Members received the annual governance report. This showed that no breaches of the Code of Conduct had been reported during the year, as well as no declarations for the receipt of gifts or hospitality by Members above the value of £25. The Committee received a report on the publication of the third edition of the Standards for England case review and the Committee agreed this would be a useful guide should any allegations of misconduct be received.

The Committee also agreed a structured workplan for 2011 which will be monitored through two meetings of the Committee which have been scheduled for :-

- Thursday 2 June 2011
- Thursday 1 December 2011

(both commencing at 9.30am)

Training

In February 2010, a training session on the local assessment of complaints was provided. This included viewing Standards for England's DVD on this matter and discussion of the stages of the complaints process and the role of the monitoring officer. A further training event was held on 28 September 2010. The training session focussed upon the code of conduct, registering interests and the future of the local standards regime.

Feedback from both sessions was positive with all attendees indicating that the content was relevant and useful. Members considered the following areas particularly helpful: reinforcing the Standards Regulations was a useful refresher; being brought up to date with proposed changes and knowing the Nolan Principles will still apply in future.

Authority Inspection

The Authority was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Audit Commission in 2009 and the Chairman of the Committee was interviewed during the inspection. The final report was published in March 2010 with the Authority adjudged to be 'performing well and improving'. The report made several references to the standards agenda included:-

"Governance arrangements are sound and based on high ethical and professional standards. Members have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and receive effective training. The Authority expects high standards of them".

"This year the Standards Committee is strengthening its focus on ethical governance"

Enhanced role

In 2009, the Standards Committee took on an enhanced role and became more pro-active within the Authority. Since that time, the Committee has undertaken a number of additional activities including:

- An annual review of the payment of Members expenses and allowances,
- Monitoring compliance with regards to Members attendance at mandatory training; completion of statutory returns (eg Members' interests); and attendance at meetings.
- The register of Members' Interests has been published on the Authority's website to improve public access to this information.

In addition, the Committee has been better informed of the workings of the Authority through:-

- The Chairman of the Committee attending meetings of the Audit Committee
- Lay members of the Committee receiving, for information, the agendas of the Authority and Audit Committee
- Lay members of the Standards Committee have been involved in relevant Authority training sessions.

Further Information

Further information on the work of the Authority's Standards Committee is available on the website:

www.cheshirepa.police.uk,

or by contacting the office on:

01244 614003