

Current role of Committee to end

This is the ninth Annual Report of the Borough Council's Standards Committee.

The Committee's main role is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors.

This applies to both Charnwood Borough Councillors and the members of the 27 Town and Parish Councils in the Borough.

All councillors have to follow a [Code of Conduct](#) which sets out the behavioural standards expected of them. The Standards Committee is responsible for overseeing the operation of the Code.

In December 2010 the Government published its Localism Bill. The Bill would remove the requirement for the Council to have a Standards Committee and the current legal framework for the Code and dealing with complaints. This would be replaced by a voluntary code and criminal offences for councillors not registering or declaring their interests.

This year the Committee is pleased to report that there has been another fall in the number of complaints it has received compared to the number it received last year and the year before.

Only one new complaint was made about

More information about the complaints process and a complaint form are available on the [Council's website](#)

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Outcome	Complaints made in 2009/10	Complaints made in 2010/11
Not investigated	3	1
No breach of Code	0	0
Referred to Standards Panel	1	0
Referred to Adjudication Panel	0	0
Still under investigation	0	0
TOTAL	4	1

councillors during the year. Using the process described on the [Council's website](#), the Standards Panel decided that it should not be investigated.

The Committee is pleased to report that the time taken to reach this decision was 11 working days, less than the recommended 20 working days.

Further details of a complaint made in 2009/10 that was determined this year by the Standards Panel can be found on page 2.

Other aspects of the work of the Committee and its plans for the year ahead are described in the remainder of this report.

Review of the year

Determination hearing

One investigation begun in 2009/10 was concluded this year and the complaint was referred to the Standards Panel for determination.

The complaint was that Michael Lemon had breached the Code of Conduct of Mountsorrel Parish Council by failing to treat a member of the public with respect.

The Panel concluded that although there had been a heated debate at the meeting this did not amount to a breach of the Code.

Despite there being one hearing during the year, the Committee is

pleased to report that the number of councillors found to have breached the Code is low.

Only one breach of the Code has been found in the last four years.

Other work

In addition to considering complaints and the emerging changes to the standards regime, the Committee has discussed a number of other issues.

It received regular reports on the guidance issued to councillors on standards issues and significant cases elsewhere in the country relating to the conduct of

councillors so that appropriate advice and training needs could be identified.

The Committee also reviewed the training provided to councillors and officers in relation to standards issues and the councillor training programme generally.

In addition to the Code of Conduct, the Council has a number of other codes and protocols which the Committee oversees.

No complaints that one of these other codes and protocols had been broken were investigated by the Monitoring Officer during the year.



Members of the Committee (from left to right): Mr Tomlinson (Independent Member), Cllr Edwards, Cllr Pacey, Cllr Bava, Mrs Crick and Mr Griffiths (Parish Members). Other members of the Committee are Mr Lindley, Mr Pearson (Independent Members), Cllr Campbell and Cllr Osborne.

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Looking ahead to next year

The Committee will continue to perform its functions until they are formally ended. This is expected to happen late in 2011 or early in 2012.

Until then the current Code remains in place and the Committee will continue to consider training arrangements for new and returning councillors following the Borough

and Parish elections in May 2011.

The Committee will also continue to consider any complaints that are received until that role officially ends.

The Committee will also consider how high standards of conduct by councillors will be

maintained in the future and how the new arrangements for registering and declaring interests and a voluntary code of conduct could be implemented.

The Committee also plans to continue holding regular meetings with Parish and Town Council Clerks.