

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7 JULY 2010

WORK PROGRAMME

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Summary

This report sets out the proposed work programme previously agreed by the Committee for 2010/11. This is kept under review and presented to each meeting of the Standards Committee. In addition the position relating to complaints considered by the Referrals Sub Committee is summarised for information only.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by all Councillors and co-opted members including church and parent governor representatives serving on the Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee has responsibility for setting its own work programme and this should be kept under regular review.

2. Report

2.1 Appendix 1 to this report sets out the proposed work programme for the Committee up to May 2011.

2.2 The Committee should also note that at the time of this agenda despatch ten complaints alleging member misconduct are currently being investigated locally following consideration by the Referrals Sub Committee. Standards for England guidance on timescales for an investigation acknowledges there are many factors that can affect the time it takes to complete an investigation. There is an expectation that the Standards Committee will monitor the progress of investigations and the SfE guidance recommends that most investigations are carried out, and a report on the investigation completed, within six months of the original complaint being assessed by the Referrals Sub Committee.

2.2 On 24 June 2010 the Review Sub Committee considered a complaint asking for a review of the decision of no further action on an allegation. The decision of this Review Sub-Committee was to uphold the decision of the original Referrals Sub Committee decision that there should be no further action in respect of the allegation.

- 2.3 Two more complaints relating to a Parish Council are due to be considered by the Referrals Sub Committee later in July.
- 2.4 The following table provides indicative timescales for conclusion of investigations currently underway. Completion timescales are later than previously reported to the Committee. This is primarily because the Investigating Officer has experienced delays in securing dates for interviews with some key people. Upon completion of an investigation the Hearings Sub Committee is responsible for determining whether it accepts a finding of no failure to observe the Code of Conduct, or that the matter should be referred for consideration at a hearing or to the Adjudication Panel for determination. The timescale for holding a hearing to consider the outcome of a local investigation is normally within three months from completion of that investigation.

Complaint reference	Indicative timescale for completion of investigation
DU/MO/107	Due to conclude mid August
DU/MO/111	Consideration meeting pending, due to conclude Mid July
DU/MO/113	Due to conclude early August
DU/MO/114	Due to conclude early August
DU/MO/115	Due to conclude early August
DU /MO/116	Due to conclude early August
DU/MO/117	Due to conclude early August
DU/MO/119	Due to conclude early July
DU/MO/121	Decision pending
DU/MO/122	Decision pending

2.5 **Membership of Hearing Sub-Committees**

Following a review of Standards Committee procedures, Members are asked to consider a proposal that when a consideration meeting of the Standards Hearing Sub Committee is convened that where possible the same panel is convened to deal with any consequential hearing and if this is not possible that members are then appointed in the agreed alphabetical order.

3. **Financial and legal implications**

- 3.1 The cost of local investigations are met from within existing budgets.

- 3.2 The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and associated SfE guidance prescribe the procedures relating to allegations of member misconduct.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 To consider and comment on the work programme for 2010/11.
- 4.2 To note the position on complaints referred for investigation by the Referrals Sub Committee.
- 4.3 To agree that, where possible, the same Members should be appointed to serve on the Hearings Sub Committee at “consideration” stage and or any subsequent hearing of the particular case.

Background papers

Standards for England Guidance on “Local Assessment of Complaints” and “Determinations”.

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