

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**Municipal Year 2013-14**

This is the Ninth Annual Report of the Standards Committee, established under the Local Government Act 2003.

It is constituted (as at May 2014) as follows:

*Elected Members*

Cllr Dolling  
Cllr Moles  
Cllr Sharif  
Cllr Titmuss  
Cllr Worlding

*Independent Members*

Mr John Jones (Chair)  
Mr James Hearnshaw (Vice-Chair)  
Mrs Maureen Briggs  
Mrs Cheryl Smart  
Mrs Madeleine Williams

Note: It is required that each of the local assessment, review and adjudication panels should be chaired by an Independent Member and that an elected Member should also be present.

At the Annual Meeting on 21st May 2013, Mr J Jones was elected Chair and Mr J Hearnshaw Vice Chair of the Committee. During the year the Committee was pleased to welcome Madeleine Williams as an Independent Member.

The membership of the various panels referred to above was established at a brief meeting following the Annual Meeting of Council.

As members will be aware, following the Localism Act, this Committee changed into an Advisory Committee, with its existing role of advising, monitoring, and training of members in matters concerning the correct observance of the Code of Conduct. Additionally, the Committee retained its role in adjudication in the event of an allegation of a breach of the Code being brought before it, and of recommending to full Council what sanction should be imposed in the event of that breach being proved.

Furthermore the Committee are expected to work with the appointed Independent Persons whom all Public Authorities are required to consult in the event of a complaint being made to the Monitoring Officer. It should be

noted that, as the existing Independent Members of the Committee continued their period of appointment beyond the 1st of July 2012, none of them is eligible to act as Independent Person for this authority.

As there is no appeal path for any decisions which may be made concerning breaches of the Code, apart from that of judicial review, consideration has been given to the implications which this may have and members alerted to how this may affect the way in which complaints are processed, in particular when the complaint has been made by:

- a) The Executive Leader
- b) A member of the Standards Committee
- c) The Council's Chief Executive
- d) The Council's Monitoring Officer (or a Deputy)
- e) The Council's Chief Finance Officer (for the purposes of Section 151 of the LGA 1972).

or against one of the Group Leaders or a member of the Standards Committee.

### **Members Attendance**

In the Annual Reports of recent years I have published the official attendance figures for the various committees of the Council. These are taken from the CMIS record and members were advised to check regularly the accuracy of these figures during the year. These figures are attached as Appendix 1.

It is recognised that this record is not intended to reflect in any way the amount of work which Members may undertake, outside the various committees and bodies mentioned, in particular work with outside organisations and for constituents. It is information which can be obtained by trawling the website and is therefore intended to provide a summary, rather than a commentary, on each member's attendance.

### **Breaches of the Code**

I can report that during the municipal year there were two allegations of breaches of the Code brought before the Committee. Following investigation and meetings of the Adjudication Panel one of these was upheld (in relation to non-declaration of an interest, when a censure was recommended) and one was dismissed.

### **Council Monitoring**

Throughout the year the meetings of Full Council have been monitored on a regular basis by the Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

On checking the feedback from the independent members I can report once again that the behaviour has maintained its generally high standard reported on last year. The independent members of the Standards Committee would like to congratulate elected members on this achievement.

Finally, I cannot close this Report without mentioning the support which has been provided to the Committee (as well as to me personally) by Angela Claridge in her role as Monitoring Officer. I have enjoyed working with her and the rest of the legal team as the changes, outlined above, have come to pass. These have now bedded in and seem to be working well.

I would also like to acknowledge the support provided by Democratic Services who are always willing to go that extra mile to support me in this role.

I know I speak on behalf of all the Independent Members of the Standards Committee when I thank all those concerned for their help and support.

John Jones  
Independent Chair,  
Standards Committee

October 2014