

Annual Return 2010

Authority name
Chorley Borough Council
Annual Return 2010 - form v1.18

PART 1: COMMUNICATION

The main roles of a standards committee are:

- to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members
- to assist members in observing the Code of Conduct.

Your responses to this section will help us to collect examples of the different ways that standards committees communicate messages about ethical standards, both within the authority and to the wider public.

Annual Report

Does the standards committee produce an annual report?

Yes

What does the report contain?

A personal statement by the standards committee chairman, Information about the members of the standards committee, The role of the standards committee, The standards committee terms of reference, Information about the Code of Conduct, Statistical information about complaints that have been received, Information about the length of time taken dealing with complaints, A summary of complaints which have led to investigation, sanction or other action, Details about training/events provided, The forward work plan of the standards committee, Other

Please describe what "Other" contents are in the report.

parish mentoring scheme
recruitment of parish members
best practice
work of sub-committees

How is the standards committee annual report circulated?

Sent to all senior officers, Sent to all members, 3c, Available on the authority intranet, Available as a specific item on the authority website, Included as a full authority meeting agenda item, Available at authority offices

The report is "Available as a specific item on the authority website", please provide the web address.

[http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/Published/C00000114/M00002109/AI00018114/\\$AnnualReport.docA.pdf](http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/Published/C00000114/M00002109/AI00018114/$AnnualReport.docA.pdf)

Publicising Complaints

How can the public access information about how to make a complaint against a member?

Through a 'compliments and complaints' type section of the council website, Through the standards committee section of the website, Complaints leaflets available from the authority, Advertised through parish councils

The information is on the "'compliments and complaints' type section of the council website", please provide the web address.

<http://www.chorley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=406>

The information is on "standards committee section of the website", please provide the web address.

<http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=124>

How can the public access information about the outcome of initial assessment decisions?

Written summary available for public inspection

How can the public access information about the outcome of investigations?

Hearings are open to the public, Publicised in the local press only if the subject member agrees,

Published on the authority website, Decision notices are available for public inspection

Do you have a mechanism in place for measuring the satisfaction of all those involved in allegations of misconduct? For example the member, complainant and witnesses.

No

Communicating the role and work of the standards committee and standards generally

What does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the rest of the authority (i.e. internally)?

Dedicated standards committee pages on intranet , Standards committee independent members observe other authority meetings, Other

Please describe the "Other" methods used.

Member Addressed Email Newsletter "In the Know" contains standards reminders eg registration of interest forms / gifts and hospitality.

How can the public access information about your standards committee?

Dedicated standards committee section on the authority website, Within 'council and democracy' type section of website, Standards committee minutes, agendas, and reports are available to the public, Leaflets and/or posters are placed in public buildings, Places articles in the authority newsletter / bulletin / other publication

Please provide the web address for the standards committee section on the authority website.

<http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=124>

Please provide the web address for information within the council and democracy section of your website.

<http://www.chorley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3023>

What else does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the public and other partners?

Local Strategic Partnership (the Chorley Partnership) Constitution includes the 10 general principles of public life.

Chorley Council's Framework for Partnership Working includes direct reference to standards of personal behaviour and the code of conduct with a requirement that all parties within the partnership observe the tenets of the code.

PART 2: INFLUENCE

A key factor in creating a strong ethical framework in authorities is clear ethical leadership from leaders and chief executives, setting the tone for the rest of the organisation.

Your responses to this section will help us to understand how closely your standards committee works with political and officer leadership in the authority, and the ways in which the leadership encourages strong ethical standards.

How does the standards committee communicate ethical issues to the senior figures within your authority (for example the Chief Executive and Leader of the Authority, Party Leaders)?
Informal discussion on particular standards issues, Monitoring Officer is a member of or attends Corporate Management Team (or equivalent) meetings

How do the senior figures in your authority demonstrate strong ethical values?
Through a strongly promoted whistle-blowing policy, Demonstrating appropriate behaviours

Does your authority have a protocol for partnership working that outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all those working in partnership?

Yes

What mechanisms does the authority use for dealing with member/officer and/or member/member disputes?

Informal discussion/mediation, Monitoring Officer mediation, Senior figure mediation (e.g. Chief Executive), Advice from Human Resources department, Solicitor / legal adviser consulted

PART 3: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

A specific function of a standards committee is to train members on The Code of Conduct, or arrange for such training. A standards committee can also arrange training on the local standards framework. Your responses to this section will help us to form a view about what the most common topics and methods of training are so that we can share them with the rest of the standards community.

Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of authority members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

No

If no, please give your reasons why?

Such assessments by way of PDP's are done bi-annually. Last completed in 2008-9

Annual training on the Code of Conduct is provided and all members are invited to attend. Although their individual needs are not specifically assessed.

What training/support was provided during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010?

Introduction to the Code of Conduct, Elements of the Code of Conduct, Role and responsibilities of the standards committee, Ethical governance/behaviour

Who received training/support?

Standards committee chair, Independent members, Other standards committee members, All authority members, Specific authority members with particular needs (e.g. new members, planning committee members), Other

Which "Other" people received training?

Parish members and clerks

What methods were employed to give training/support?

Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops), Joint/regional training event, Guidance notes/briefing materials, Standards for England materials

In which areas of the Code of Conduct has training/support been provided?

Respect, Personal/Prejudicial Interests, Use of resources, Bullying, Disrepute, Predisposition, Pre-determination and bias, Equality, Confidentiality

What other training/support has been provided on areas of an authority member's role or activities they may engage in?

Chairing skills , Predetermination, Predisposition and bias

In general, how well attended was the training provided?

25-50%

Please give a brief overview of how standards issues are covered in your induction process for new members of the authority?

Presentation by Monitoring Officer on Code of Conduct and general discussion. Completion of Register of interest form.

In which areas of the role and responsibilities of the standards committee has training/support been provided for standards committee members? Please tick all that apply.

Initial assessments, Other action/mediation, Reviews, Investigations, Hearings, Sanctions, Other

Describe what "Other" areas were covered.

Parish Mentoring

PART 4: INVESTIGATIONS

Have any investigations been completed during the period 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2010?

Yes

How many investigations have been completed during this period?

2

Have any of the investigations used external investigators?

Yes

NOTE: This includes employees of other authorities.

Of the investigations completed during the period, for how many have external investigators been used?

1

Overall, what was your principle reason for out-sourcing the investigation(s)?

Impartiality

What type of external investigator(s) did you use?

Self-employed investigator

For the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, what was the approximate total cost of fees paid to the external investigator(s) for completed cases?

£ 3538.00

Please provide a brief overview of the processes you have in place to ensure the quality of local investigations.

Investigating Officer is restricted to Legal or other Senior Officer with experience of the Code of Conduct.

The Standards for England guidance is followed .

Interviews are tape recorded or noted in manuscript contemporaneously.

Reports follow Standards for England template.

PART 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

We recognise the value of the vital role parish councillors play in representing their communities. Your responses to this section will help us to build a clearer picture of the level of support and communication between principle and parish/town councils.

Has your authority provided training for parish councillors during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010?

Yes

If yes, what topics did the training cover?

The Code of Conduct generally, Personal and prejudicial interests

What methods were employed to give training/support?

Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops), Guidance notes/briefing materials, Standards for England's materials

In general, how well attended was the training for parish councillors?

0-25%

Has your authority provided training for parish clerks during the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010?

Yes

What topics did the training for parish clerks cover?

The Code of Conduct generally, Personal and prejudicial interests

What methods were employed to give training/support to parish clerks?

Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops), Guidance notes/briefing materials, Standards for England's materials

In general, how well attended was the training for parish clerks?

0-25%

Does your council have a COMPACT (a formal agreement with your county Association of Local Councils about supporting standards for parish and town councils in the area)?

No

Describe the relationship between your authority and your County Association of Local Councils in relation to standards. For example, how regularly do you interact with them? Are you involved in delivering joint training?

Provide venue for meetings but no substantial involvement.

Standards for England and Teesside University are currently researching the role of the Parish Liaison Officer. Teesside University have created a brief questionnaire to assess the organisational background, functions and skills needed to carry out the Parish Liaison role. Does your authority have a Parish Liaison Officer?

No

What steps have you taken when dealing with parishes which have had problems with standards issues? For example, what preventative or capacity building work have you done with parishes?

None - no real parish issues.

Which of the following areas would you like Standards for England to produce additional guidance on to support your work with parishes?

Planning and interests, Dual-hatted members