

# **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2012 / 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is my first annual report to Council since my election as Chair of the Standards Committee. This report updates Council on the Committee's activities.

### **Standards Committee's Responsibilities**

The Standards Committee was set up in May 2012 as part of the new Constitution. Its areas of responsibility include:

- To advise the Council on the adoption of and any revisions to the Code of Conduct for Members, to monitor its operation, and to assist Members and Independent Members to observe its provisions;
- To promote high standards of conduct by Members and Independent Members;
- To deal with reports from the Assistant Town Clerk, or other officer delegated by the Chief Executive, on their investigations into allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

### **Membership**

The Council elected me as Chair at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012, and the Committee elected Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel as Vice-Chairman at its first meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012. The other Members of the Committee are Mr Councillor John Faragher and Mr Councillor John Skinner. Mr Derek Booth, the

Independent Member, was selected following a competitive recruitment process, and his appointment was ratified by the full Council at a Special Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

### **Review of the Year**

The Standards Committee has met on two occasions during the year (6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013).

There have been a wide variety of topics considered by Members during this first year of business, which have included:

- Terms of Reference;
- Remit and Functions of the Committee;
- Procedure for Investigation of Complaints against Members;
- Procedure for Hearings;
- Standards Committee Handbook;
- Register of Members' Interests;
- Forward Plan;
- Training;
- Gifts and Hospitality;
- Programme for Review of Codes and Procedures.

## **Forward Plan**

The Committee's work programme is set out in the Forward Plan (appended), which was agreed by the Committee in November 2012. The Forward Plan is a list of the key matters which are the main subjects of the Committee's programme of work, that it will consider before October 2013.

They have been identified as key matters because they are the issues which will have the most significant impact on improving and guiding the standards and ethical framework of the Council, in the initial stages of the Committee's work.

The Forward Plan is updated by Members at every Standards Committee meeting, on a rolling basis, to reflect their priorities as a Committee.

The Committee has already reviewed the Protocols on:

- Gifts and Hospitality;
- Member / Officer Relations;
- Members and Officers involved in Partnerships;
- Local Government Code of Conduct for Members and Officers.

## **Complaints**

The Committee has set out detailed procedures for investigation and consequent action. These are embodied in the Standards Committee Handbook, published on

the Council's website [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im), and the Intranet. One complaint was investigated during the year and was dealt with through the procedures.

## **Future Meetings**

The dates for future meetings have been set for 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013.

## **Conclusion**

Douglas Borough Council has a Standards Committee that is committed to upholding and promoting high standards amongst Members, and overseeing the promotion of awareness and understanding of the relevant Codes and Protocols.

We will continue to look at ways in which we, as a Committee, can improve and serve both the Council and the people of Douglas by good governance delivering an effective service.

**MR COUNCILLOR E A JOYCE  
CHAIR  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

April 2013.