

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Communication Strategy – Ethical and Governance Matters

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council; for assisting Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct and for promoting high ethical standards within Parish Councils. Within its terms of reference the Standards Committee can also undertake any action that improves, promotes, safeguards and facilitates the highest standard of probity and ethical conduct by the Council, its Members and Officers and advise the Council on ethical aspects of good governance standards for public life.
- 1.2 Members of the Standards Committee may also be required to participate directly in the process of dealing with allegations that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct if a Hearing Panel of the Committee is established following an investigation into an alleged breach of the Code.
- 1.3 It is important that individual Members of the Standards Committee are themselves adequately communicated with in ethical and governance matters to enable them to act as effective Members of the Committee.
- 1.4 Ethical and governance matters is a key aspect for all 45 Members of Northampton Borough Council.
- 1.5 It is important that all residents and stakeholders are communicated with on the standards of public life in Northampton.

2 Key Objectives of the Councillor Communication Strategy – Ethical and governance matters

- To raise the profile of Ethical and Governance Matters and the work of the Standards Committee, both internally and externally.
- To improve understanding amongst Councillors and Officers of the importance of ethical and governance matters.
- To ensure Councillors, the public and key partners are aware of Northampton Borough Council's Code of Conduct.
- To explain to the public what the Council, and the Standards Committee, does to ensure it is governing ethically.

3 Key Messages

- 3.1 The Standards Committee is an independent Advisory Committee for the Council which helps to maintain and monitor the standards of public life in Northampton.
- 3.2 Standards of public life in Northampton borough are high.
- 3.3 To communicate clear and consistent key messages highlighting the Council's commitment to being an ethical organisation by ensuring that Councillors uphold their responsibilities and conduct their business in an ethical manner.
- 3.4 To raise the profile of the role of the Standards Committee and promote the important contribution it makes to local community, reinforcing the importance of ethical and governance matters.

4 Key Information

- 4.1 Key information that is provided, includes:
 - Information regarding the role of the Standards Committee and what the Committee does not deal with
 - The membership of the Standards Committee
 - How to contact the Monitoring Officer should an individual want to submit a Code of Conduct complaint

5 Audience

- 5.1 The audience includes:
 - Residents and other stakeholders in the Borough of Northampton
 - Members of Northampton Borough Council
 - Council staff
 - External bodies
 - Local media
 - National and professional media

6 Vehicles for publicity

- 6.1 Vehicles for publicity include:
 - Press releases
 - Standards Committee webpage
 - Council wide publicity, via the Intranet
 - Residents' newsletters

6.2 Specific information about the Committee, such as the process for complaints in accordance with Northampton Borough Council's Code of Conduct, are provided on the Council's webpage.

6.3 The Work of the Committee is detailed with its annual Work Programme.

7 Review

7.1 The Councillor Communication Strategy – Ethical and Governance Matters will be reviewed annually.