



Meeting of the

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 January 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTAL A G E N D A

	PAGE NUMBER	WARD(S) AFFECTED
5 .1 MEMBERS' TIMESHEETS AND ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEES/PANELS	1 - 14	All Wards
5 .2 ANALYSIS OF MEMBERS' ETHICAL STANDARDS SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES OCTOBER 2005	15 - 26	All Wards

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact:

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Agenda Item 5.1

Committee STANDARDS	Date 17 th January 2006	Classification UNRESTRICTED	Report No.	Agenda No. 5.1
Report of Head of Democratic Renewal & Engagement Originating Officer(s): Peter Sass	Title MEMBERS' TIMESHEETS AND ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEES/PANELS Wards affected ALL			

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee with regard to the issue of Members' timesheets and the associated issue of attendance at meetings and follows on from a report considered by the Committee at its October, 2005 meeting.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the current position with regard to the submission of Members' timesheets and attendance at formal meetings, since the last meeting; and
- 2.2 Agree to receive a further report at its next meeting on 11th April, 2006 providing up to date information with regard to the completion of timesheets and attendance at formal meetings.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Local Government Act, 2000 introduced a new system of modernised local government, which had the broad aim of making Councils more effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. The new system, which came into force in Tower Hamlets in May, 2002, provided for a clear separation between the executive role and the overview and scrutiny function within local authorities. This separation of functions involved changing and developing roles for councillors.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97) LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Brief description of "background paper"

Name and telephone number
of holder and address where
open to inspection

Reports by the Independent Panel on the
Remuneration of Councillors in London

Peter Sass 020 7364 4204
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,
5 Clove Crescent, London,
E14 2BG

- 3.2 Against this background, the 2000 Act also made provision for a new Members' Allowances regime. This required local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The local authority would need to have regard to the views of this Panel before fixing or changing its Members' Allowances Scheme. In London, an Independent Remuneration Panel set up by the Association of London Government, advises London Borough Councils on their Allowances Schemes.
- 3.3 In its first report, the Independent Remuneration Panel for London looked at the issue of allowances in the context of tasks and responsibilities which they believed were the essential remit of a councillor. In proposing a basic allowance to apply to all councillors, they assumed a "contribution" of 40 hours per month on top of a "voluntary commitment" of 20 hours for every member. Members undertaking specific additional responsibilities such as Chairs or Cabinet members would be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance in addition to the Basic Allowance.
- 3.4 The Independent Remuneration Panel has now produced three reports and in each one it has emphasised the need for an accountable and transparent allowance scheme so that ultimately the public can see how the Basic Allowance is justified.
- 3.5 In order to build on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the former Policy and Implementation Committee agreed in April, 2002 that the then diary sheets should be replaced by members' timesheets with an expectation that members would devote at least 60 hours each month to their Council duties. The Committee further agreed that members' timesheets should be made available both in existing public register format and also on the Council's website. The Committee also asked the Standards Committee to monitor the completion of timesheets but this has since been relaxed on the advice of the District Auditor.
- 3.6 The timesheet originally introduced did not present well on the web, required members to present more information than was strictly needed and was labour intensive to get on the web. As a result a new timesheet, designed to overcome these problems, was introduced in January, 2004. An example is attached at Appendix 1. Those members wishing to see it live can find it by clicking "Your Council" on the left hand side of the home page of the Council's website and then clicking "Meet your Councillor". The visitor is then given a list of all Councillors. If you click on the Councillor of your choice, you will be presented with information on ward represented, committee appointments, surgeries and timesheets.
- 3.7 At the Council meeting on 4th March, 2004, a Notice of Motion was tabled criticising the poor performance of some members in submitting timesheets. In his reply, the Leader urged all councillors to submit their timesheets as promptly as possible. He also asked the then Interim Head of Democratic Renewal and Engagement to write to councillors reminding them of their obligations. This Committee has received a report at each one of its meeting since April, 2004, detailing the attendance of Members at Council and other formal meetings and also the position with regard to the submission of Members' timesheets. The Monitoring Officer has also written to Members advising them of the possible risk of a report being made to the Standards Board, should they fail to attend meetings or submit timesheets.
- 3.8 During the latter part of last year, a significant improvement in the submission of Members' timesheets became evident, as a result of hard work by political groups and by officers, together with the high profile given to the issue by this Committee. At the time of the last meeting of this Committee in July, 2005, only 5 Members (10%) were more than

2 months behind with their timesheets, compared to 16 Members (31%) in April, 2004. In addition, a reminder letter was issued in the name of the Chair, notifying Members who were three months or more in arrears with their timesheets that early submission is required.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Timesheets

- 4.1 Since the Standards Committee meeting in July, further work has been done by both officers and the political groups, to achieve an improvement in the submission of timesheets. The current position (as at 10th January, 2006), as indicated on the attached schedule (Appendix 2), shows that 19 Members (37%) are more than two full months behind with their timesheets, which is a worse position compared to October, 2005. However, it is highly likely that the Christmas and New Year break has affected the completion and submission of timesheets and, as usual, work will continue and an updated appendix will be tabled at the meeting. There are now no Members who have not submitted any timesheets for a year, compared to 5 Members in July, 2004.
- 4.2 Work on the existing format of the Members' timesheet has continued and a new level of detail is now available.

Attendance

- 4.3 Associated with the return of timesheets and the publicly accountable performance of Councillors, is the issue of attendance at meetings. The chart at Appendix 3 shows the attendance of Councillors at meetings during the 2004/05 Municipal Year and since the Council's Annual meeting in May.
- 4.4 Members will note the schedule has been revised to address the concerns of the Committee previously, notably that:-
- a) The meetings measured reflect those in the revised Constitution;
 - b) Meetings of the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) are now included, although it should be noted that not all relevant LAP Members are appointed to the Steering Groups, although all are invited;
 - c) The percentage column has been removed, as this could be misleading;
 - d) There is now a "health warning" on the schedule, to indicate some of these issues and the inappropriateness of comparison; and
 - e) Meetings of all current Scrutiny Panels are now included.
- 4.5 The Appendix shows that the overall situation is satisfactory.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In the first instance, responsibility for ensuring submission of timesheets and attendance at meetings is an issue for individual Members and party political groups to address. However, there may come a time when the Standards Committee may need to act.

- 5.2 In the case of the timesheets, the former Policy and Implementation Committee resolved that all councillors should complete timesheets. Transparency and the accountability of councillors to the public for the Basic and Special Responsibility allowances that they receive is a central plank of the new legislation and the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations on allowances. Staff in the Members' Support Team are available to help councillors complete timesheets and there seems no reason why any councillor need get into considerable arrears.
- 5.3 Similarly, while there is no legal requirement compelling a councillor to attend a meeting (the law simply says that if a councillor fails to attend a meeting of which he or she is a member over a period of six months, that councillor shall cease to be a member of the local authority), it is difficult to see how a councillor can discharge their obligations to their constituents unless they are regular in their attendance at meetings.
- 5.4 The combination of action already taken in this regard, as explained in the report, has effected an improvement in the overall situation. It is suggested that the Committee should note the improvement and receive a further report at its next meeting on this matter.

6. OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 6.1 The Head of Democratic Renewal and Engagement is exploring solutions to enable a full input into the new timesheet system. Any costs arising from this exercise will need to be contained within the Democratic Renewal and Engagement budget for 2005/06.

7. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

- 7.1 The Committee is being asked to note the overall improvement in the submission of timesheets and attendance at Committees/Panels, since the last meeting. The Committee is also asked to note that a further report on the matter will be submitted to the next meeting.
- 7.2 The Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001 details principles which are to govern the conduct of Members of relevant authorities in England and police authorities in Wales. The Schedule sets out a number of general principles, including the principle that Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities.
- 7.3 The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (England) Order 2001 sets out the conduct which is expected of Members and co-opted members of authorities which are operating executive arrangements. Schedule 1 to the Order sets out the Code, which is mandatory.
- 7.4 The Order contains a number of general obligations, which include the provision that a Member "must not in his official capacity, or any other circumstance, conduct himself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office or authority into disrepute."
- 7.5 All Members have been advised by letter that a persistent and unjustifiable failure to complete timesheets may well bring the Council into disrepute and constitute a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, giving rise to a complaint by a member of the public to the Standards Board for England.

8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific equal opportunity considerations arising from the proposals in this report.

9. **ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific anti-poverty issues arising from the proposals in this report.

10. **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no risk management implications.

11. **SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

11.1 There is no action arising from this report.

MEMBERS TIMESHEET

MEMBERS NAME:	
MONTH:	
NUMBER OF SURGERIES HELD:	
NUMBER OF CASES:	
HOLIDAY AND ANNUAL LEAVE:	
SICK:	
COUNCIL MEETINGS ATTENDED	TIME SPENT
EXTERNAL BODIES MEETINGS	TIME SPENT
OTHER	TIME SPENT
<i>(Please enter total time spent on any of the following – you do not need to enter the number of meetings)</i>	
Chair's Pre Agenda Meetings	
Citizenship Ceremony	
Civic Receptions	
Community Events	
Conferences	
Corporate Parenting Steering Group	
Group Meetings	
Holiday/s	
LAB Meetings	
Learning, Achievement & Leisure (CPAG)	
Living Well (CPAG)	
Local Area Partnership (LAP)	
Mayoral Engagements	
Meeting with Council Officer/s	
Meeting with Councillor/s	
Meeting with other organisations	
Members Training Sessions/Seminar	
MP/MEP/Minster -Meetings	
NDC Meetings	
Olympic Bid	
Paperwork, Reading & Telephone Calls	
School Governors Meeting	
Site Visits	
Tenants/Residents Meeting	
Time Spent on Casework	
Time Spent at Surgery	
Working Party	

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED TIMESHEET TO MOIRA LEWIS, MAYORAL & MEMBERS' SERVICES MANAGER

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**MEMBERS MONTHLY DIARY SHEETS – SUMMARY OF RETURNS MADE 2005/06**

Councillor	JNE	JLY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	
Abbas	4	4	4	4	4								
Ahmed, A M O	4	4	4	4	4								
Ahmed, M. U	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Ahmed, R.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Ahmed, R. U.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Alexander, L	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Amos, A	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Asad, A	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Brooks, R	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Chatopadhyay	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Chowdhury, J	4	4	4	4									
Duffey, B	4	4	4	4									
Edgar, D	4	4	4	4									
Gardiner, J	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Gipson, R	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Griffiths, J	4	4	4	4									
Haque, S	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Islam, S	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Jones, D	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Keith, M	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Khan, A. R	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Khan, K. R.	4	4	4	4									
Ludlow, J.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Mainwaring, J	4	4	4	4									
Matin, A.	4	4	4	4									
McCollum, N	4		4	4									
McGregor, A.	4	4	4	4									
Miah, F.	4	4	4	4	4								
Morton, K.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Mortuza, M. G.	4	4	4	4									
Murshid, K.	4	4	4	4									
O'Flaherty, T.	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Phelps, H.	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Rahman, Ak	4	4	4	4									
Rahman, At	4	4	4	4									
Rahman, H.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Rahman, L.													
Rahman, O	4	4	4	4	4								
Rew, M	4	4	4	4									
Rouse, S	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Salique, A.	4	4	4	4									
Sanderson, J.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Sardar, A. A.	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Sharpe, J.	4												
Shukur, A.	4	4	4	4	4	4							
Son, B.	4	4	4	4									
Uddin, M. S.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Ullah, D.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Ullah, S.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4						
Uz-Zaman, M	4	4	4	4									
Williams, M.	4	4	4	4	4								

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – 1ST OCTOBER, 2005 – 31ST DECEMBER, 2005

APPENDIX 3

	Council	Cabinet	Dev Cttee	Licensing Cttee	O & S Panel	Health Scrutiny Panel	Standards Cttee	Pensions & Accounts Cttee	Olympics Dev Cttee	Personnel Cttee	Appeals Cttee	Appnts Cttee	General Purposes Cttee	Strategic Dev Cttee	Licensing Sub-Cttee	Appnts Sub-Cttee
Total Held	4	5	10	8	7	3	2	0	0	1	8	1	2	3	19	2
Abbas	4															
O.Ahmed	3	5		6						1		1	0		2**	
M.U.Ahmed	4										7	1				1
R.U.Ahmed	3		8										2	2		
Rajib Ahmed	3			4						1					5**	
Alexander	3				6							0				
Amos	4			7	7										8**	
Asad	3	5														1
Brooks	4	5														
Chattopadhyay	4					1	1			1	6					
Chowdhury	4															
Duffey	0			7												
Edgar	4	4													6**	
Gardiner	4	5												3		
Gipson	2		7	5											6**	
Griffiths	4															
Haque	4	5														1
Islam	4										1					
Jones	4	5														1
Keith	4	5														2
A.R.Khan	4					3										
M.R.Khan	4		7		6	3										
Ludlow	4											1		1		1

QUALIFYING NOTES:

1. This schedule denotes the attendance of Members at Council, Cabinet and the Standing Committees of the Council only and does not include ad-hoc advisory panels that some Members serve on.
2. Care should be taken in calculating the attendance of members in percentage terms, as, for instance, not all Members of the Appeals Committee would be summoned to serve on every Appeal.
3. With regard to Local Area Partnership meetings, not all relevant Ward Members are nominated to serve on the relevant LAP Steering Group, even though they would all be invited.
4. Some Members are appointed to more Standing Committees/Panels than others, therefore making a precise comparison of attendance between Members often inappropriate because of opportunity.
5. Members sometimes attend meetings in a substitute capacity for their colleagues.

** Part of pool of Members to sit on Licensing Sub-Committees

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – 25TH MAY, 2005 – 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2005

	Council	Cabinet	Dev Cttee	Licensing Cttee	O & S Cttee	Health Scrutiny Panel	Standards Cttee	Pensions & Accounts Cttee	Olympics Dev Cttee	Personnel Cttee	Appeals Cttee	Appnts Cttee	General Purposes Cttee	Strategic Dev Cttee	Licensing Sub-Cttee	Appnts Sub-Cttee
Total Held	4	5	10	8	7	3	2	0	0	1	8	1	2	3	19	2
Mainwaring	4															
Matin	4										3			3		
McCollum	2										1					
McGregor	3		5										2			
Miah	3			3											1**	
Morton	3			5		1									2**	
Mortuza	3		8													
Murshid	4															
O'Flaherty	3					2				1						1
Phelps	3															
Ak. Rahman	3		5													
At. Rahman	4			2											5**	
M. Rahman	3			4		1				1		1			1**	
Al. Rahman	4			2							0					
O. Rahman	4					3										
Rouse	4				5											
Rew	4		9													
Salique	4			5												
Sanderson	2												2			
Sardar	4				6											
Sharpe	4		9											1*		
Shukur	4	4			5											
Son	4			4											7**	
M.S.Uddin	4	5														
D Ullah	4															
S Ullah	4		8		5											
M Uz-Zaman	4		3	7									1		1**	
M Williams	2			6	7		2				5				8**	

QUALIFYING NOTES:

1. This schedule denotes the attendance of Members at Council, Cabinet and the Standing Committees of the Council only and does not include ad-hoc advisory panels that some Members serve on.
2. Care should be taken in calculating the attendance of members in percentage terms, as, for instance, not all Members of the Appeals Committee would be summoned to serve on every Appeal.
3. With regard to Local Area Partnership meetings, not all relevant Ward Members are nominated to serve on the relevant LAP Steering Group, even though they would all be invited.
4. Some Members are appointed to more Standing Committees/Panels than others, therefore making a precise comparison of attendance between Members often inappropriate because of opportunity.
5. Members sometimes attend meetings in a substitute capacity for their colleagues.

* Councillor Sharpe appointed to Strategic Development in September, 2005

** Part of pool of Members to sit on Licensing Sub-Committees

**ATTENDANCE AT SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS/PANELS - 2005/06
(25TH MAY – 31ST DECEMBER, 2005)**

Scrutiny Challenge Session – Planning Obligations

Date: 12.9.05 **Attended:** Cllr J. Griffiths
 Cllr J. Ludlow
 Cllr M. A. Salique
 Cllr J. Sharpe
 Cllr B. Son
 Cllr M. Uz-Zaman

Also in attendance:

Cllr A. Amos
 Cllr R. Gipson
 Cllr J. Mainwaring
 Cllr L. Rahman
 Cllr A. Sardar

Scrutiny Challenge Session – Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: 17.11.05 **Attended:** Cllr L. Alexander
 Cllr K. R. Khan
 Cllr A. McGregor
 Cllr A. A. Sardar

Scrutiny Challenge Session – Older People’s Commissioning Strategy

Date: 24.11.05 **Attended:** Cllr M. U. Ahmed
 Cllr R. Gipson
 Cllr K. R. Khan
 Cllr S. Ullah
 Cllr M. Williams

Also in attendance:

Cllr A. Amos
 Cllr J. Ludlow

A Partnership for Success – Role of Members in the THP

Date: 28.9.05 **Attended:** Cllr F. Miah
 Cllr D. Ullah
 Cllr M. Williams

Date: 30.11.05 **Attended:** Cllr B. Chattopadhyay
 Cllr J. Mainwaring
 Cllr D. Ullah

Also in attendance:

Cllr J. Ludlow

Date: 19.12.05 **Attended:** Cllr J. Griffiths
Cllr D. Ullah
Cllr M. Williams

Also in attendance:

Cllr B. Chattopadhyay
Cllr J. Mainwaring
Cllr F. Miah

Health Scrutiny Panel – Annual Health Check ELCMHT

Date: 3.10.05 **Attended:** Cllr Khan

ATTENDANCE AT LAP STEERING GROUP MEETINGS – 2005/06

LAP 1

<u>Date:</u>	6.9.05	Attended: Cllr L. Alexander Cllr R. Ahmed Cllr J. Griffiths Cllr A. R. Khan
	28.11.05	Cllr R. Ahmed Cllr L. Alexander Cllr J. Griffiths Cllr A. R. Khan

LAP 2

<u>Date:</u>	26.5.05	Cllr S. Islam Cllr M. G. Mortuza
	13.9.05	Cllr J. Griffiths Cllr S. Islam
	8.12.05	Cllr S. Islam Cllr M. G. Mortuza Cllr S. Ullah

LAP 3

<u>Date :</u>	12.7.05	Cllr F. Miah Cllr O. Rahman Cllr D. Ullah
	6.9.05	Cllr F. Miah Cllr O. Rahman Cllr S. Uddin

Further information to be supplied

LAP 4

<u>Date:</u>	14.6.05	Cllr M. Ahmed Cllr S. Haque Cllr D. Jones
	19.7.05	Cllr D. Jones
	20.9.05	Cllr A. Shukur Cllr D. Jones

Further information to be supplied

LAP 5

Date : 12.7.05 Cllr R. Gipson
Cllr M. Rew
Cllr M. Williams

26.9.05 Cllr R. Gipson
Cllr J. Ludlow
Cllr M. Rew
Cllr M. Williams

19.11.05 Cllr R. Gipson
Cllr J. Ludlow
Cllr M. Williams

LAP 6

Date: 28.6.05 Cllr K. Khan
Cllr H. Rahman
Cllr A. Salique
Cllr A. Sardar
Cllr M. Uz-Zaman

14.9.05 Cllr D. Edgar
Cllr H. Rahman
Cllr A. Sardar
Cllr M. Uz-Zaman

Further information to be supplied

LAP 7

Date : 20.7.05 Cllr O. Ahmed
Cllr K. Morton

9.11.05 Cllr K. Morton

LAP 8

Date: 19.7.05 Cllr A. Amos
Cllr B. Chattopadhyay
Cllr J. Mainwaring
Cllr S. Rouse
Cllr J. Sharpe
Cllr B. Son

22.11.05 Cllr A. Amos
Cllr J. Mainwaring
Cllr J. Sharpe
Cllr B. Son

Agenda Item 5.2

Committee STANDARDS COMMITTEE	Date 17th January 2006	Classification UNRESTRICTED	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Report of Sara Williams, Assistant Chief Executive Originating Officer(s): Steve Wiggett, Member Learning and Development: 020 7364 4374	Title: Analysis of Members' Ethical Standards Self Assessment Questionnaire Responses October 2005 Wards affected N/A			

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an analysis of the findings of the Ethical Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire exercise completed by all Members during September and October 2005.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Standards Committee is asked to note the findings of the questionnaire analysis, and consider conclusions in respect of providing further learning opportunities for Members to develop their knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Members.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the ethical framework for local government the Council has adopted the Code of Conduct for Members in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. The Code is designed to assist the Council in providing excellent local government for the people of the borough.
- 3.2 The Code of Conduct sets out the following principles for all Members:
- not to bring the Council into disrepute;
 - the promotion of equality;
 - treating others with respect and not compromising officer impartiality;
 - respecting confidentiality;
 - reporting breaches of the Code; and
 - the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests
- 3.3 The Council's former Chief Legal Officer delivered a series of mandatory training workshops for Members during 2004, which focused on conflicts of interest and included the ethical framework for local government; 50 of the Council's 51 Members participated in these workshops.
- 3.4 Members were subsequently invited to complete the Ethical Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire (please see Appendix 1) in order to measure their understanding of the application of the Code of Conduct.
- 3.5 The questionnaire sought Members' responses to a number of multiple choice and open questions designed to:
- Indicate when Members last familiarised themselves with the Code of Conduct;
 - Assess Members' understanding of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, including which interests Members are required to register and the difference between personal and prejudicial interests;
 - Further validate the training received on conflicts of Interest;
 - Check Members' knowledge of the action they are required to take if they reasonably believe another Member has breached the Code of Conduct;
 - Gauge Members' understanding of the role of the Standards Committee and its most important functions;
 - Identify further Member learning needs and guidance required in relation to ethical standards.

4.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 All 51 of the Council's Members completed and returned the Ethical Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire. Appendices 2-7 provide a breakdown of Member responses to question numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.
- 4.2 The majority of Members 60%+ indicated that they had familiarised themselves with the Code of Conduct within the last six months. The remaining Members 39%+ indicated that they had not familiarised themselves with the Code within the last six months.
- 4.3 100% of Members confirmed that they were either clear (49%+) or fairly clear (50%+) about their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.
- 4.4 The Conflicts of Interest training was generally well received, with almost 55% of Members finding the training provided useful and over 35% of Members indicating that the training was fairly useful; 4 Members indicated that they did not find the training useful and 1 Member has not attended the training offered. An individual briefing session will be arranged for this Member as soon as possible.
- 4.5 Almost 63% of Members indicated that they were clear about which interests they were required to register and over 33% of Members indicated that they were fairly clear. The two Members who indicated that were not very clear will be contacted and offered further support to develop their understanding.
- 4.6 Members indicated that they understood the difference between personal and prejudicial interests either well (53%+) or fairly well (39%+); 4 Members indicated that they were not very clear about the difference. A further briefing will be offered to these Members in order to clarify their understanding of personal and prejudicial interests.
- 4.7 35%+ of Members indicated they understood well the role of the Standards Committee and 54%+ of Members indicated they understood the Committee's role fairly well; 5 Members indicated that they did not understand the Committee's role very well and further information explaining the role of the Standards Committee will be circulated to these Members.
- 4.8 19 Members indicated that they would find further training, briefing sessions or guidance notes in relation to ethical standards useful.
- 4.9 Overall, Members' responses to the Ethical Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire are positive and indicate that the majority of Members have either a clear or fairly clear understanding of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Members. However, the

aim for all Members is to ensure that they fully understand the Code of Conduct for Members and are able to apply ethical standards of behaviour in a consistent manner.

- 4.10 Those Members who have indicated that they are fairly clear or not very clear about their responsibilities under the Code will require access to a range of learning opportunities to further develop their knowledge and understanding.
- 4.11 There are a several interventions that can be effectively used to meet the above Member learning needs. These include:
- further briefing sessions facilitated by the Assistant Chief Executive, (Legal Services),
 - using the Members' intranet to set up guidance notes which provide responses to Code of Conduct frequently asked questions; and
 - circulation of examples of good practice.
- 4.12 The completion of the Ethical Standards Self Assessment Questionnaire has provided a useful indicator for benchmarking the different levels of Members' understanding in relation to their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. Consideration should be given to inviting Members to self assess their level of knowledge and understanding on an annual basis.
- 4.13 Members must have regular access to opportunities for developing their knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. In the near future, this will be particularly important for new and re-elected Councillors following the local Council Election in May 2006, and proposals to amend the requirement of the Code of Conduct, which are currently being considered by the ODPM. To facilitate this, comprehensive learning and development sessions on the Code of Conduct will be built into the Members' induction programme and further briefing sessions will be provided throughout the year.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 5.1 The application of ethical standards is important because actions taken or statements made by anyone acting on behalf of the Council can expose the Council to financial risk, amongst other things.
- 5.2 The costs of the development programme set out in the report can be met from existing resources.

6.0 CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

6.1 This report has been drafted in conjunction with the Council's legal department and comments are included in the body of the report.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The Members' Code of Conduct reflects the Council's equalities policies.

8.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no anti-poverty implications.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The work to ensure high ethical standards should improve confidence in local democracy and protect the interests and reputation of the Council.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)
LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Brief description of "background paper"

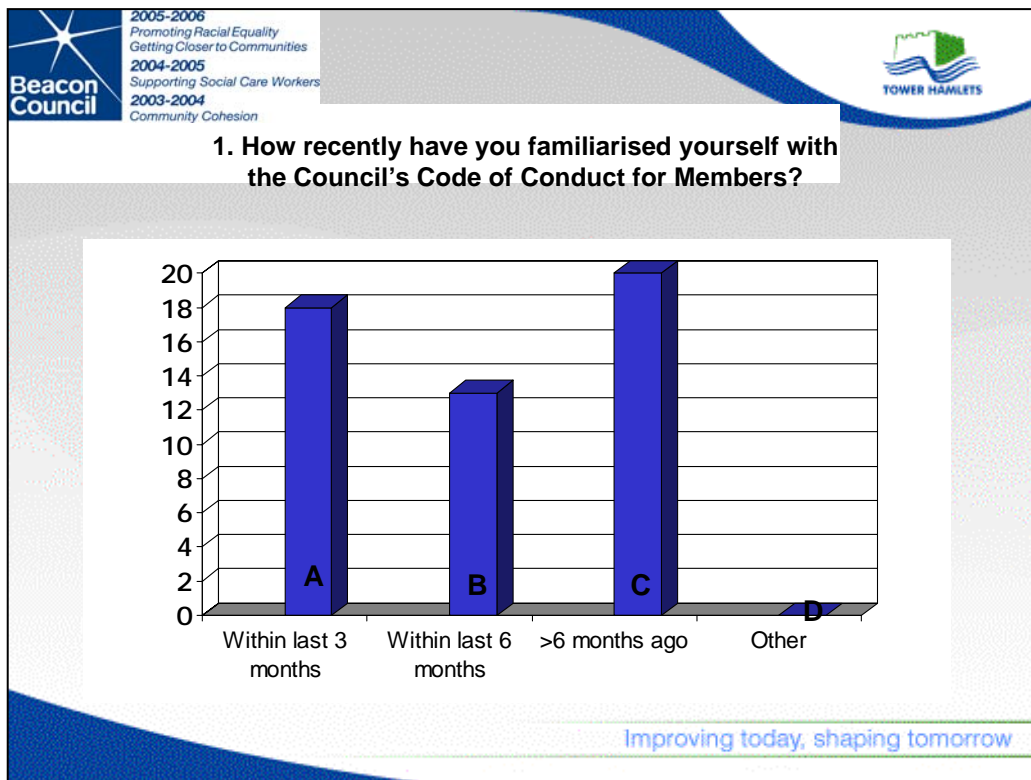
Name and telephone number
of holder and address where
open to inspection

ETHICAL STANDARDS SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. How recently have you familiarised yourself with the provisions of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members?
(a) within the last 3 months (b) within the last 6 months (c) more than six months ago
- 2. How clear are you about your responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Members?
(a) clear (b) fairly clear (c) not very clear
- 3. How useful did you find the training provided in relation to Members' interests and the ethical framework for Councillors?
(a) useful (b) fairly useful (c) not very useful
- 4. How clear are you about which interests you need to register?
(a) clear (b) fairly clear (c) not very clear
- 5. How well do you understand the difference between personal and prejudicial interests?
(a) well (b) fairly well (c) not very well
- 6. If you become aware of conduct by another Member which you reasonably believe amounts to a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members what must you do?
.....
.....
.....
- 7. How well do you understand the role of the Standards Committee?
(a) well (b) fairly well (c) not very well
- 8. What do you think is the most important function of the Standards Committee?
.....
.....
.....
- 9. Are there any areas of further training, briefing sessions or guidance notes in relation to ethical standards which you would find useful?

COMPLETED BY COUNCILLOR:

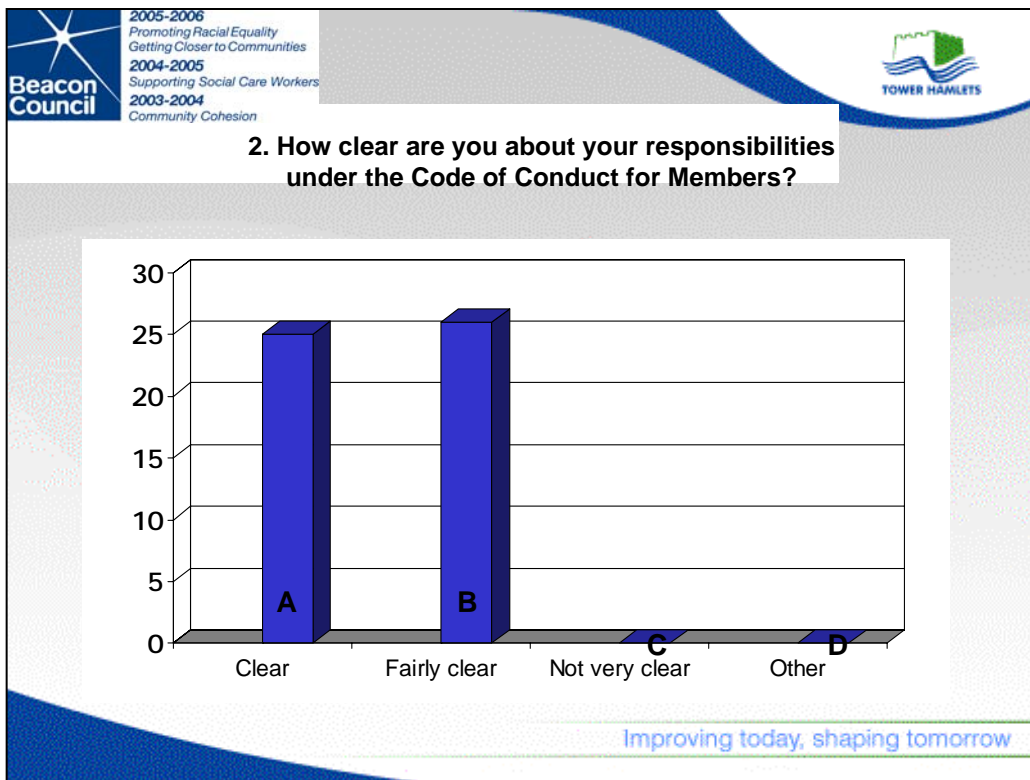
DATE :



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 1

How recently have you familiarised yourself with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members?

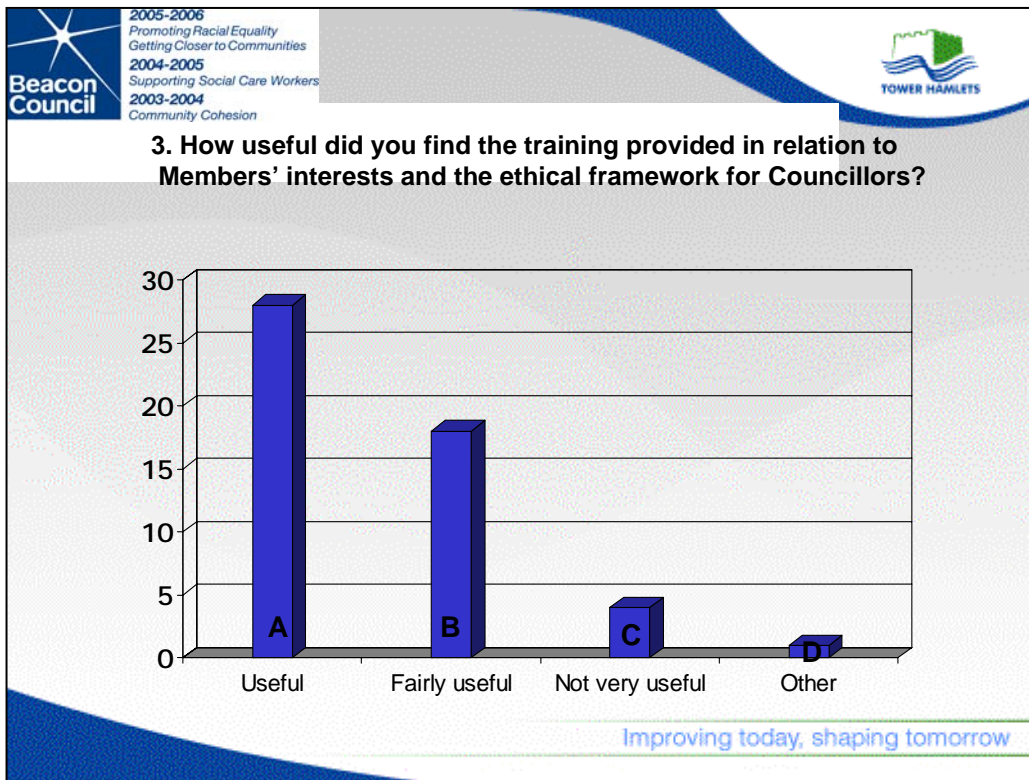
- A. Within the last 3 months (18) Members (35.3%)
- B. Within the last 6 months (13) Members (25.4%)
- C. More than 6 months ago (20) Members (39.2%)
- D. Other (0)



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 2

How clear are you about your responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Members?

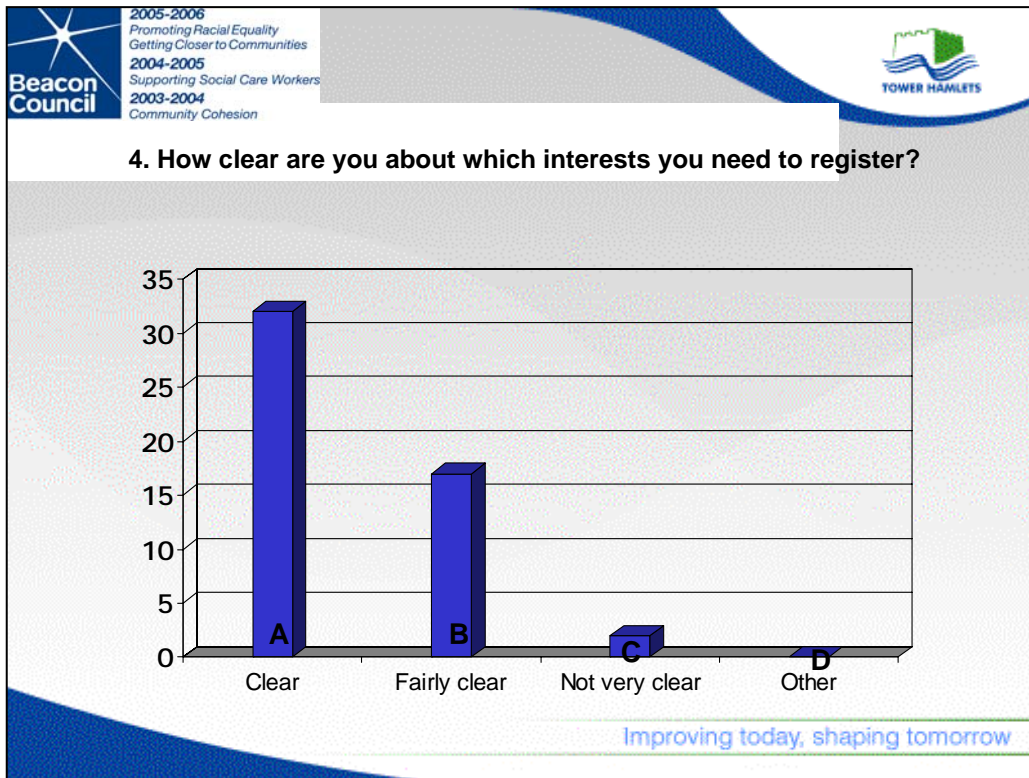
- A. Clear (25) Members (49%)
- B. Fairly clear (26) Members (50%)
- C. Not very clear (0)
- D. Other (0)



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 3

How useful did you find the training provided in relation to Members' interests and the ethical framework for Councillors?

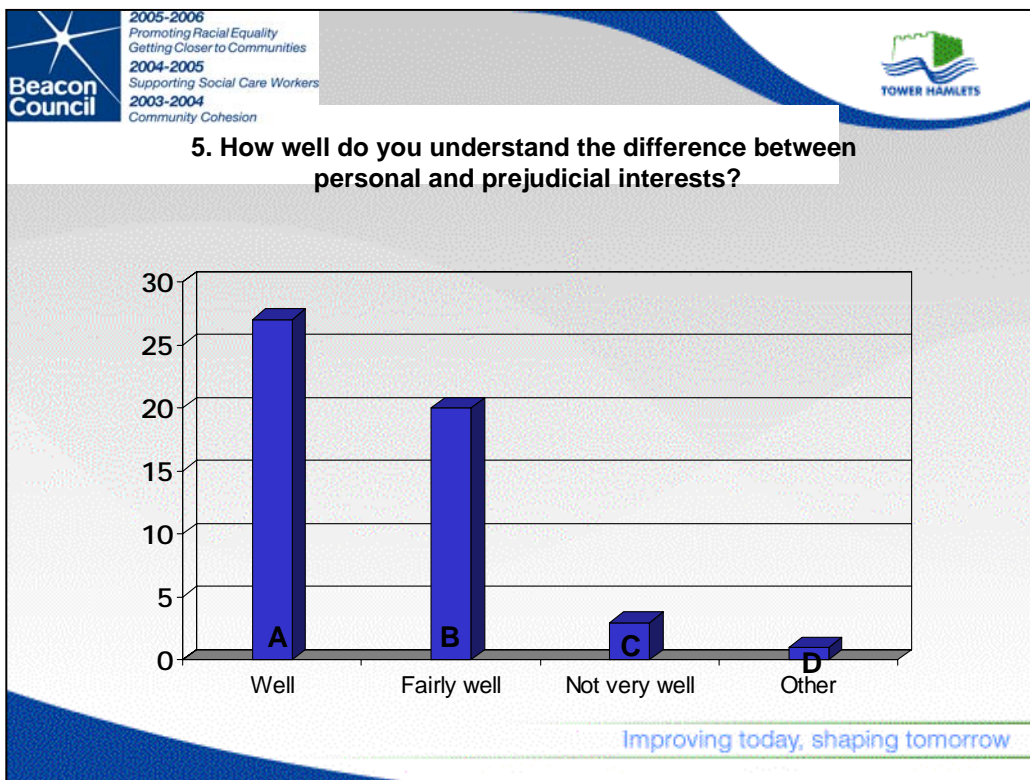
- A. Useful (28) Members (54.9%)
- B. Fairly useful (18) Members (35.3%)
- C. Not very useful (4) Members (7.8%)
- D. Other (1) Member



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 4

How clear are you about which interests you need to register?

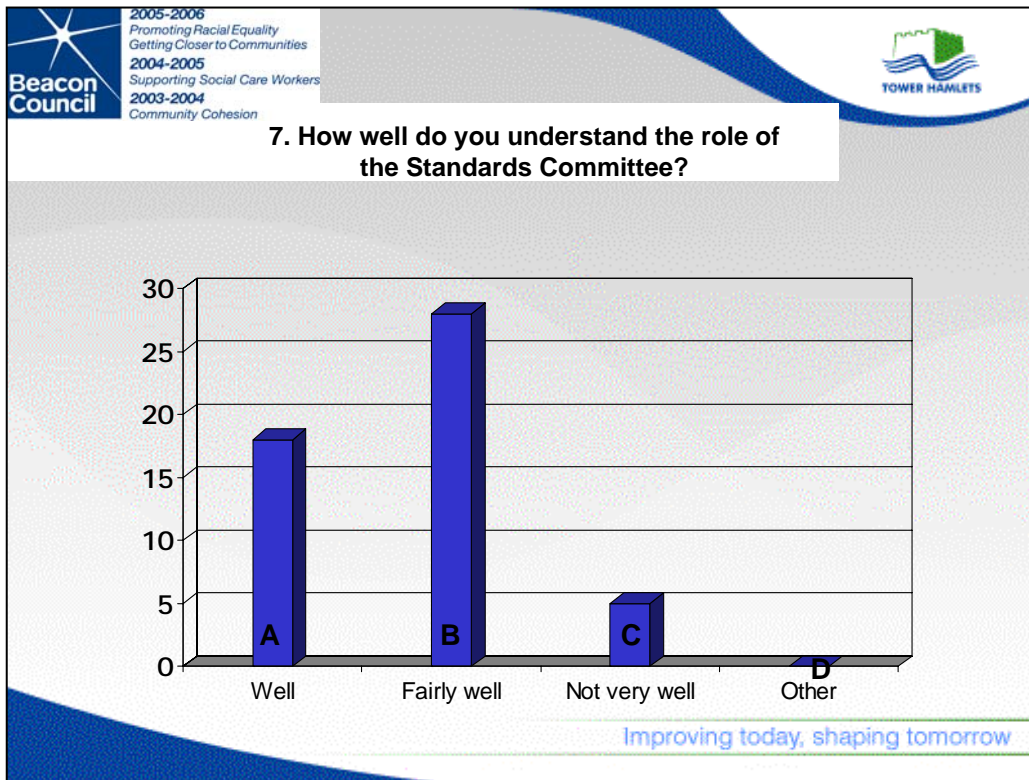
- A. Clear (32) Members (62.7%)
- B. Fairly clear (17) Members (33.3%)
- C. Not very clear (2) Members (3.9%)
- D. Other (0)



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 5

How well do you understand the difference between personal and prejudicial interests?

- A. Well (27) Members (52.9%)
- B. Fairly well (20) Members (39%)
- C. Not very well (3) Members (5.8%)
- D. Other (1) Member



Self assessment questionnaire summary- question 7

How well do you understand the role of the Standards Committee?

- A. Well (18) Members (35.3%)
- B. Fairly well (28) Members (54.9%)
- C. Not very well (5) Members (9.8%)
- D. Other (0)