



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2011

TIME: 5.30 PM

**PLACE: FOUNTAIN ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, TOWN HALL, TOWN
HALL SQUARE, LEICESTER**

Members of the Committee

Councillors Clair, Draycott, Keeling, Potter, Scuplak and Thomas

Mrs Sheila Brucciani (Independent Member) (Chair)

Ms Kate McLeod (Independent Member)

Ms Mary Ray (Independent Member)

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

for Director of Corporate Governance

Officer contact: Heather Kent/Julie Harget

*Democratic Support,
Leicester City Council*

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Email heather.kent@leicester.gov.uk or or Julie.harget@leicester.gov.uk

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND MEETINGS

You have the right to attend Cabinet to hear decisions being made. You can also attend Committees, as well as meetings of the full Council. Tweeting in formal Council meetings is fine as long as it does not disrupt the meeting. There are procedures for you to ask questions and make representations to Scrutiny Committees, Community Meetings and Council. Please contact Democratic Support, as detailed below for further guidance on this.

You also have the right to see copies of agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk or by contacting us as detailed below.

Dates of meetings are available at the Customer Service Centre, King Street, Town Hall Reception and on the Website.

There are certain occasions when the Council's meetings may need to discuss issues in private session. The reasons for dealing with matters in private session are set down in law.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Meetings are held at the Town Hall. The Meeting rooms are all accessible to wheelchair users. Wheelchair access to the Town Hall is from Horsefair Street (Take the lift to the ground floor and go straight ahead to main reception).

BRAILLE/AUDIO TAPE/TRANSLATION

If there are any particular reports that you would like translating or providing on audio tape, the Democratic Services Officer can organise this for you (production times will depend upon equipment/facility availability).

INDUCTION LOOPS

There are induction loop facilities in meeting rooms. Please speak to the Democratic Services Officer at the meeting if you wish to use this facility or contact them as detailed below.

General Enquiries - if you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact Heather Kent, Democratic Support on (0116) 229 8816 or email heather.kent@leicester.gov.uk or call in at the Town Hall.

Press Enquiries - please phone the Communications Unit on 252 6081

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 12 January 2011 have been previously circulated and Members are asked to confirm that they are a correct record.

4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT [Appendix A](#)

The Chair of the Standards Committee submits a report that asks Members to note the achievements of the Standards Committee for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 and to consider the challenges for the year ahead. Members are invited to note the report and consider the actions for the following year.

5. LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL: FULL COUNCIL ETIQUETTE GUIDE [Appendix B](#)

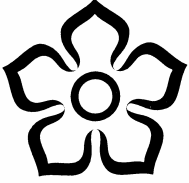
The Director, Corporate Governance submits an etiquette guide for Members' use in Council meetings. The Committee is recommended to note the guide.

6. STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2011 WORK PROGRAMME : MARCH 2011 [Appendix C](#)

The Director, Corporate Governance submits the Standards Committee 2011 Work Programme: March 2011. The Committee is asked to note the Work Programme.

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Appendix A



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
Type in Ward

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Standards Committee
Council

16 March 2011
24 March 2011

STANDARDS COMMITTEE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Report of the Chair of the Standards Committee

1. Purpose of Report

To note the achievements of the Standards Committee for the period 1.July 2009 - 30.June.2010 and to consider challenges for the year ahead.

2. Recommendations

Members are invited to note the Report and consider the actions for the following year.

3. Report

- 3.1 During this period the Standards Committee met on eight occasions. Of these, six were regular scheduled meetings and two were special meetings held for the purpose of accepting a Report of an Investigation. In addition the Assessment Sub-committee met on two occasions.
- 3.2 Membership of the Committee, which is made up of six elected members and three independent members, varied with several changes of elected members during the period. This presented the Committee with some particular challenges especially the need for training in the quite technical requirements of the Standards Regime legislation. However, all of the members have responded well to the challenges and an element of continuity was maintained by the three independent members and one elected member who has remained on the committee since its inception.
- 3.3 Activities of the Committee
- 3.4 Terms of Reference for the Committee and its Sub-committees were reviewed and redrafted.
- 3.5 The Committee continued its tradition of inviting guests to our meetings. In its first meeting of the period we welcomed the Chief Executive and enjoyed a discussion on the embedding

of ethical standards into the Council's work. We also discussed with her the handling of complaints against elected members highlighting the limitations of the current standards regime which requires a bureaucratic procedural approach rather than allowing for informal methods of dispute resolution.

In September Lord Mayor Councillor Roger Blackmore attended and led a discussion about the Lord Mayor's role in maintaining high standards in Council and supporting new members.

- 3.6 The new Director of Corporate Governance was welcomed during this period and we acknowledged the supportive role played by Peter Nicholls as interim Monitoring Officer.
- 3.7 Much of the work of the Committee has involved receiving and commenting upon Reports relevant to the ethical aspects of the Council's work. Corporate Governance Annual Reports for 2008-9 and 2009-10 were scrutinised during the period and feedback offered. The Audit Commission Ethical Governance Report was welcomed as this praised the work of the Committee and detailed the ways in which Ethical Governance had improved in the Council since 2007 particularly in the high standard of training of members in the Code of Conduct
- 3.8 The Code of Practice for Member involvement in Development Control Decisions and in Pre-Application discussions were reviewed and amendments suggested.

Also discussions were held and revisions suggested to the Code of Practice for Member involvement in Licensing decision making.

- 3.9 Briefings on legislation relevant to the Committees work and a policy briefing on "The public perception of ethics" were received and discussed. A report on the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill prompted a discussion about the Council's process for dealing with petitions.
- 3.10 The Committee also revised the Council script on Member Conduct at Meetings.
- 3.11 In October the Chair attended The Annual Assembly of Standards Committees and presented learning points from that to the Committee. From this a regular update of case law for members was introduced. There was some discussion of how the Standards Committee might be helpfully involved developing ethical criteria for partnership working and development of closer working with neighbouring authorities. The Committee recommended that a Cabinet member take the lead on Standards issues and the Leader of the Council accepted that role. The Chair also took part in a regional workshop to respond to consultation on a prospective New Code of Conduct. Standards for England regular bulletins and publications concerning topics such as Dispensations, and Standards for Blogging were received and noted.
- 3.12 This was a quiet year for complaints against elected members with only 2 complaints reaching the Assessment Sub Committee. By comparison with our neighbouring authorities in the same period there were 3 in Nottingham City and 15 in Derby City. In Leicester there were no breaches of the Code although there was one hearing outstanding which has now been concluded.

3.13 Looking to the Future.

3.14 During the year 2010-11 we will produce written guidance for members who are the subject of a complaint, we will continue to work closely with our neighbouring authorities by making our independent members available to them when needed and sharing ideas about training. We will continue to play an important role in developing the Council's ethical framework.

3.15 There are uncertain times ahead. Prior to The General Election the Conservative party announced its intention to disband the Standards Regime if elected. It is now clear that this will happen probably before April 2012. This provides a good opportunity for the Council to make its own decisions about how to ensure high standards of conduct in the future. This could include putting in place a more flexible system of dealing with complaints. I am confident that, in the coming months, following consultations and discussions a way forward will be found.

4. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Steve Charlesworth, Head of Finance (Financial control)

4.2. Legal Implications

There are no additional legal implications.
Peter Nicholls, Director of Legal Services

4.3. Climate Change Implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications and therefore should not have a detrimental effect on the Council's climate change targets.
Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement

5. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph/References Within the Report
Equal Opportunities	N	
Policy	N	
Sustainable and Environmental	N	
Crime and Disorder	N	
Human Rights Act	N	
Elderly/People on Low Income	N	
Corporate Parenting	N	

Health Inequalities Impact	N	
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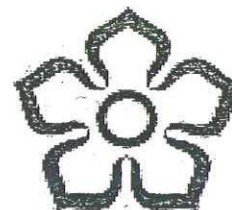
6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Nil

7. Report Author

Sheila Brucciani, Independent Chair of the Standards Committee

July 2010



Leicester
City Council

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL ETIQUETTE GUIDE

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one
leicester

Full Council - Etiquette Guide

1.	<p>Who is invited to attend the pre council buffet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I attend? • Can I take a visitor to the tea? • Who do I contact to get permission? • What time does it start? 	<p>The buffet before Council in the Tea Room is for Councillors, senior officers and invited guests of the Lord Mayor.</p> <p>It is not usual to take guests to the Tea Room as that is where some of the pre-council discussion takes place between members.</p> <p>Sometimes the Lord Mayor will agree to visitors if there is a special occasion.</p> <p>The buffet is available from 4pm.</p>
2.	<p>Where do I sit in the Council Chamber?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I allowed to move seats? 	<p>Your Group Whip will usually allocate the seats at the start of the municipal year (May) or when any changes take place in membership of committees or cabinet.</p> <p>The Cabinet usually sit in the first section of the Chamber. Labour Group sit on the left side facing the front, the main opposition (Conservative) sit on the right side facing the front. Liberal Democrats sit in the next section beside the opposition and any independent councillors sit next to them.</p> <p>The microphones and webcasting are set up for each meeting according to the seating plan.</p> <p>If you want to change seats you should speak to your Group Whip.</p>
3.	<p>Am I allowed to bring visitors into the Council Chamber?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do I have to ask for permission 	<p>Usually it is only councillors, senior officers and the press who sit downstairs. Members of the public can sit in the public gallery.</p> <p>Sometimes the Lord Mayor will allow other guests to sit downstairs – permission needs to be sought</p>

		<p>from him in advance of the meeting and you need to tell the front desk to expect your guest if the Lord Mayor agrees to it.</p> <p>People attending for the Lord Mayor's announcements will also be present in the Chamber – again permission will need to be sought in advance from the Lord Mayor.</p>
4.	Do I have to stand up in the meeting?	<p>Those of you who are able should stand up when the Lord Mayor comes into and goes out of the Chamber. Take your lead from the Civic Attendant. Sit down when the Lord Mayor invites you to do so.</p>
5.	<p>If I'd like to speak at Council in response to something –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When am I allowed to? • What do I do? • Do I have to get permission? 	<p>You can speak to ask a question of a Cabinet Member if you have submitted it in advance.</p> <p>You can speak during a debate if you are a proposer or seconder of a motion, or if you want to take part in the debate. During the debate slightly raise your hand to catch the Lord Mayor's attention and he/she will add you to the speakers list. Sometimes Groups decide in advance who will speak on issues.</p>
6.	<p>How do I ask a question?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can I ask a question about? 	<p>You can ask a question of the Cabinet Leads about anything to do with the Council and its services. Questions need to be submitted in writing to Democratic Support Team by 10 am the day before the Council meeting. This gives time for an answer to be prepared.</p>

7.	<p>How can I speak during a debate?</p>	<p>You will need to put your hand up to indicate to the Lord Mayor that you want to speak.</p> <p>The Lord Mayor will invite you to speak. You then have 5 minutes to put forward your point. There are lights at the front of the Chamber – Green means you have time, Amber means one minute to go and Red means you have had your 5 minutes.</p>
8.	<p>Do I have to stand up to speak?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do I stand up? • How do I use the microphone? • Can someone show me how the microphone works? 	<p>Yes, you need to stand up to speak. You will need to indicate to the Lord Mayor by raising your hand that you want to speak. You must press the button on the microphone base before you speak and remember to switch the microphone button off when you have finished speaking and have sat down.</p> <p>There will be someone available before the Council meeting to show you how the microphone works.</p>
9.	<p>Is there anything I have to say as I speak?</p>	<p>It is customary for councillors to start by saying “Thank you my Lord Mayor”</p>
10.	<p>Do I have to stay for the whole duration of the meeting or can I leave at any time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I take a comfort break or get a drink and go back to the meeting – if so what do I do? 	<p>Usually members stay for the whole meeting unless they have made arrangements with their Group Whip to leave early.</p> <p>You can take a comfort break or go to the Tea Room for a drink and then go back to the meeting.</p> <p>Sometimes the Lord Mayor stops for a recess part way through the meeting. At this point the Lord Mayor will stand. At this point everyone must stand and stay in</p>

		their seat until the civic party have left the Chamber. You are then allowed to sit or take a comfort break or go to the Tea Room for a drink before you go back into the Chamber.
11.	Is there a dress code for the Council Meeting?	There is no set dress code, but some Groups require their members to dress smartly. Ask your Group Whip for more information.
12.	As the meeting is being webcast is there anything I should be aware of?	Regardless of whether the meeting is being webcast members should respect other members. There is a meeting protocol attached to the Council script. You should not reveal any confidential information at the meeting.
13.	Why do they have Lord Mayor's announcements?	The announcements are a chance to celebrate success or be informed of important things coming up. If you have something you thing should be announced you can speak with the Lord Mayor, however they may decide not to add it to the announcements.
14.	What is the correct response for the Lord Mayor?	"My Lord Mayor"
15.	Could I ask for a mentor from my Group to show me the ropes for my first meeting? If so, who do I speak to?	Speak to your Group Whip or to John Thorpe in the Democratic Support Team. They will talk you through the proceedings.
16.	Am I allowed to take refreshments into the meeting?	You can take drinks into the Council Chamber but not food.

17	<p>Am I allowed to bring my laptop into Meeting and work at the same time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any wifi connections? • Is it allowed? 	<p>It is not common practice to bring a laptop into the Chamber – some members might consider it to be disrespectful. Members do, however, use their blackberries. Twitter is permitted to be used during the meeting.</p>
18	<p>How do I take a petition to Council?</p>	<p>Petitions must be with Democratic Services not later than 3 clear days before the meeting so they can be included on the agenda. You will have to present the petition to Council and it will be referred to the Director of Corporate Governance to determine the most appropriate course of action. When presenting the Petition you must make sure you read out in full the correct wording for the purposes of our webcasting. There is no debate about petitions at Council meetings when they are presented. For more information on petitions please contact Francis Connolly on 2298811.</p>
19	<p>How does Council make a decision?</p>	<p>At the end of a debate a vote is taken. This can be by the Lord Mayor saying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All those in favour say aye” • Show of hands • Recorded vote – 5 people need to stand up and ask the Lord Mayor for a recorded vote. The names of the councillors are read out and you need to say “for”, “against” or “abstain”. <p>The Lord Mayor will then announce the decision.</p>

20	If I disagree with a decision at Council what do I do?	Speak to your Group Whip. Decisions are made based on a vote by councillors.
21	<p>If I have some constituents that would like to sit in the public gallery to watch a particular item be discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is that allowed? • Who do I speak to, to get this arranged? • Where do they go? • Who do they report to? • Can they attend for one item or do they have to stay for the whole meeting? 	<p>Anyone can go into the public gallery. The entrance is on Bowling Green Street and is open from 4.30 pm. Seating is subject to availability. Commissionaires are always on standby to guide members of the public.</p> <p>People can stay for as long or as short a time as they wish.</p>
22	If there are hecklers in the public gallery and they are directing insults at me what do I do?	<p>There is always a commissionaire in the gallery who will keep people in order.</p> <p>If this doesn't work, the Lord Mayor will call for order and can ask for the person to be removed from the gallery.</p>
23	If I don't feel well at Council is there anyone I could go to for assistance?	Speak to your Group Whip or to one of the Commissionaires on duty – they are first aid trained.

Appendix C

Standards Committee 2011 Work Programme – March 2011

2010/11

Meeting	Item	Lead
March 2011	Etiquette guide for Members	HK
March 2011	Standards Committee Annual Report	SB

2011/12

Meeting	Item	Lead
June 2011	Discussion with Lord Mayor or Elected Mayor	
June 2011	Further discussion regarding the future of Standards	

Ongoing work

Deadline	Item	Lead
Asap	Update website to increase profile of Standards	HK

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