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Mission Statement

Why do we exist?

The Standards Committee is a comparatively recent addition to the effective delivery of local government in England. Standards Committees were introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 and have now been established in all District, City and Borough Councils, and by other relevant public bodies such as Police Authorities.

All elected councillors and other members of such bodies, such as co-opted Independent members, are bound by a Code of Conduct which they must sign on taking up their office.

What is our role?

The role of Standards Committees, and our role in South Cambridgeshire, is simple but critically important –

“To uphold the ethical standards of the District and Parish Councils”

How do we deliver?

The Committee comprises at least:

- four independent members (one of whom is the chairman)
- three Parish Councillors, and
- six District Councillors.

Our principal role is to make judgement on allegations of breaches of the Code. A local panel assesses each complaint within 20 working days of its receipt and can decide whether to investigate further, to take other action such as training or mediation, or to take no further action. The complainant has the right to request a review of a decision to take no further action, which is undertaken by a separate local panel with the same powers as the initial assessment panel. Cases can be referred to the local Monitoring Officer, or even to the Standards Board for England, for investigation; either way, the investigator’s final report will be considered locally. Cases where an investigation has shown evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct may be determined by a local public hearing.

What is our purpose?

No one would argue against the need for maintenance of the highest ethical standards in public life. We are uniquely blessed in this country with a tradition of service in local government which has always had honesty and probity as core values – they run like a golden thread through all our dealings and have done since the middle of the nineteenth century.

So, there is nothing new in this! As the local Standards Committee we have resolved that we will build on the already high standards displayed by all elected members and bring added value to the delivery of local services in South Cambridgeshire. Thus, our mission will be,

“To support and enhance the democratic process in South Cambridgeshire by acting as the guardians of ethical conduct for the public we serve and elected members.”