



# ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

*Presented to the Norfolk Police Authority*

*June 2011*

**NORFOLK POLICE AUTHORITY**

*Ensuring an efficient and effective police service*

## FOREWORD BY THE COMMITTEE CHAIR



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Ethical Standards Committee of the Norfolk Police Authority for 2010/11. This is the third time the Ethical Standards Committee has made a report of this nature. We also report regularly to the full Authority via its committee reporting structure. We meet twice a year and consider the various items that fall within our Terms of Reference. Contact between the Chair and Chief Executive is not dependent on the twice yearly meetings. The Chief Executive of Norfolk Police Authority (who is the statutory Monitoring Officer) and his staff support the Committee in its work.

We act as a scrutineer of standards and related governance issues. Whilst the statutory code relates to Members, the staff of Norfolk Police Authority (NPA) have voluntarily ceded to a Code of Conduct themselves, based on an earlier draft statutory code consultation that was not taken forward by the DCLG. A new version of that was consulted upon last year, and we supported it. The General Election saw the arrival of the Coalition Government and this has now been dropped.

As with last year, we are confident from our own findings, that the NPA has a positive approach to the maintenance of high standards of conduct and probity at both Member and Officer levels. Having come through a protracted period of media and general public interest in expenses “scandals” and inappropriate use of public resources, we believe that the public of Norfolk should be pleased that the NPA has been open and transparent and free of such taint.

The new Government indicated from an early stage that they wished to review the current regime of standards in public life. It soon announced that Standards for England (SfE) would be disbanded in 2012. It also announced the repeal of the Code of Conduct from that time, and replacement with a criminal offence of “misconduct in public office”. Proposals that achieve this objective are contained in the Localism Bill, currently before Parliament.

Also before Parliament is the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Bill. This will see Police Authorities replaced in a similar timeframe. We will plan one further report before both bodies cease their roles in May 2012.

The report, whilst brief, covers what we have done. As with last year, most of it is scrutinizing. There were no complaints recorded against the Members of the Norfolk Police Authority or its staff during 2010/11. That is a highly creditable result. My fellow Lay Independent Members, Stephen Revell and Richard Middleton, and I are satisfied that, as befits an organisation responsible for oversight of those that enforce the law in this county, the NPA has demonstrated exemplary standards throughout the past year.

Bridgid Everitt

**Chair of the Ethical Standards Committee**

**Lay Independent Member**

## ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

During the year 2010/11, the Committee comprised of:

Mrs Fiona Anthony  
Mrs Bridgid Everitt (Lay Independent Member/ Chairman)  
Mr Brian Hannah  
Mrs Val Jenkins  
Mr Richard Middleton (Lay Independent Member/ Vice Chairman)  
Mr David Reeve  
Mr Stephen Revell (Lay Independent Member)

The purpose of the Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Members, and to help Members to follow the Code of Conduct. It also acts as an appellate body in relation to complaints against officers of the NPA (if any).

The Terms of Reference are as follows:

- To advise the Authority on the adoption and revision of Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers;
- To monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Authority's Codes of Conduct;
- To advise on, and arrange, training for Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To consider and, if appropriate, to grant dispensations to Members to participate in matters in which they have a prejudicial interest;
- To consider the establishment of Initial Assessment and Review Sub-Committees to discharge the functions specified in Sections 57A and 57B of the Local Government Act 2000 respectively;
- To assess and review the complaints about a Member who is alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To conduct determinations hearings to decide whether the Member be removed, either permanently or temporarily, from a Committee or other body to which the Police Authority nominates or from the Police Authority itself;
- To agree (and annually review) assessment criteria against which new complaints are assessed and to decide which action, if any, to take;
- To agree (and annually review) an investigations process to be followed by the Monitoring Officer in investigating allegations regarding Member breach of Code of Conduct;
- To consider matters referred to the Authority by the Standards Board;
- To decide on other matters relating to conduct, ethics and propriety referred to it by the Monitoring Officer;
- To grant exemptions for politically restricted posts.



## WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

During 2010/11, the Ethical Standards Committee met on the 21 April and 21 September 2010. A summary of the activities of the Committee is set out below (relevant background information is accessible via the NPA website - [www.norfolk-pa.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk-pa.gov.uk)):

### **Terms of Reference of the Committee**

The Committee discussed and approved its Terms of Reference. Members were satisfied that the Terms of Reference were sufficiently open, transparent and wide-ranging to enable them to fulfil their obligations. We also had increased the number of Lay Independent Members from two to three in order to strengthen the capability of the Committee to handle matters within the regulatory framework.

### **Annual Review of the Gifts and Hospitality Register**

The Committee reviewed the Gifts and Hospitality Register, where all gifts in excess of £25 had to be declared, and were pleased to note that Members were declaring any items received. We encouraged all Members to confirm even "nil" returns to ensure openness and complete transparency.

### **Annual Review of Members' Declarations of Interest**

The Committee completed its annual review of the Members' Interests. We found minor discrepancies but these were soon and easily rectified. Members get a monthly email reminder of the need to keep their declarations up-to-date, and every agenda has formal declarations at the early part of each meeting. Members were also recommended to include all Associations, memberships and interests, e.g. National Trust.

### **Annual Assembly of Standards Conference 2010**

Following the announcement of the close-down of the SfE by the new Government, the Board cancelled the conference planned for 2010.

### **Annual Review of the Declaration of Related Party Transactions**

The Committee reviewed the Declaration of Related Party Transactions and commended Members for their openness and transparency with regard to their declarations.

### **Annual Review of the Assessment Criteria for New Complaints and the Monitoring Officer's Investigation Process.**

Recognising the fact that it was identified as "good practice" to regularly review the Assessment Criteria and Investigation Process, Committee Members felt that no further amendments were needed to our previously endorsed approach.

### **Code Training Course 2010**

In the event, no other formal training has been required for us, or specifically for NPA Members in this area of activity. We are satisfied this is reasonable, given the previous work done and the fact that we recognise the NPA is self-aware of the importance of maintaining high standards in public life.

## WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

### **Review of Members' Allowance Scheme**

There was no further activity required of us in this area, albeit we noted and endorsed the inflationary rise for the year linked to staff pay (now frozen for subsequent two financial years).

### **Review of the Committee Programme of Business**

Members reviewed the Ethical Standards Programme of Business. Further development and evolution was unlikely given the close-down of SfE.

### **Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Police Authority Expenses**

The Committee was updated on the latest Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Police Authority expenses and bonus packages, following continuing national media coverage. Members endorsed the publication of expenses on both the Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Police Authority websites. We also fully supported the production of a "Pay & Benefits" summary document detailing the pay scales applicable throughout the Constabulary and Authority along with identifying the number of posts in each grade. This is available on the NPA website and, we believe, goes beyond what most public bodies do in this regard. We commend the NPA for this openness.

### **Review of Updated Contract Standing Orders (CSO) and Financial Regulations**

As a new part of our oversight business, we received a report on updated CSOs and Financial Regulations. Whilst in future we would usually expect to see it before final approval, this time around we were content with what had just been agreed by the NPA.

### **Complaints**

There have been no complaints recorded against NPA Members in 2010/11, nor have there been any individual complaints against Police Authority staff.



## HOW TO CONTACT US

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