

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**10 NOVEMBER 2008**

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**LOCAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider and approve local assessment criteria for the assessment of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.

**Background**

2. The Standard Board's guidance on the local assessment of complaints recommends the Committee to develop criteria against which it will assess complaints under the Code of Conduct and determine what action, if any, to take.
3. The use of established criteria will promote fairness and consistency in dealing with complaints and protect committee members from accusations of bias.
4. The criteria will be used by the Assessment Sub-Committee for the initial assessment of a complaint, and by the Review Sub-Committee in relation to any review requested by a complainant.
5. Assessment criteria may be reviewed and amended as necessary, but not during consideration of a matter.

**Main Issues for Consideration**

6. The assessment criteria should:
  - reflect local circumstances and priorities;
  - be simple, clear and open;
  - ensure fairness for both the complainant and the subject member;
  - be published;
7. In developing assessment criteria the Committee should have regard to:
  - the importance of ensuring that complainants are confident that complaints about member conduct are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately;
  - the cost of investigating a complaint in terms of public money, and officers' and members' time;

- the public benefit in investigating complaints which are less serious, politically motivated, malicious or vexatious.
8. Proposed criteria based on the guidance from the Standards Board are set out in the appendix to this report.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

9. None.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

10. There are no equality issues.

### **Risk Assessment**

11. The application of established criteria will promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of complaints and reduce the risk of challenge.

### **Financial Implications**

12. None arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

13. Establishing assessment criteria is recommended by the Standards Board and the Council must have regard to such guidance.

### **Proposal**

14. The Committee is recommended to adopt the assessment criteria set out in the appendix to this report

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### **Background Papers:**

Guidance of the Standards Board for England on the Local Assessment of Complaints

### **Appendix**

Proposed Local Assessment Criteria