

Wirral Council Ethical Governance
Amendments post initial draft report

Paragraph	Comment	Amendment
17	Is around average the right standard for Wirral?	New paragraph added: The Council also needs to consider whether it is satisfied with results that are more generally positive than the other comparator councils or whether it aspires to higher standards.
old 17, new 18	The report, survey and action plan will help the Standards Committee in raising ethical standards	Added: The report, survey results and action plan provide the members of the Standards Committee with a baseline assessment of where the Council is now and a positive framework for strengthening ethical governance arrangements to result in increased confidence in local democracy and better outcomes for local people.
old 25, new 26	Maturity of member relationships – better outcomes for local people	Added: Whilst members will have differing political opinions and priorities a high level of collaboration means that it is more likely that councils will improve outcomes and the quality of life for local people
old 28, new 29	Acknowledge wish of stds Cttee to be more proactive	The Standards Committee is operating appropriately and members are keen to develop arrangements to ensure it operates more proactively. Guidance, information and training are provided for councillors on the Committee but have been limited for Independent members.
old 30, new 31	Recognise declaration of political interests.	Applicants were asked to declare any political interests - this is good practice and helps to increase public confidence in the fairness of the Committee.
old 34-37, new 35-38	Standards Committee: soften criticism, recognise the willingness of members, particularly independent members	Paragraphs amended as below:
old 34, new 35		Members of the Standards Committee demonstrate a commitment and willingness to maintain and enhance ethical standards across the Council. But much work needs to be done to raise awareness of the Committee.

old 35, new 36		Deleted
old 36, new 37		Further opportunities exist for the Committee to be proactive. It could, for example, undertake an assessment of standards in the Council and consider the effectiveness of the codes of conduct and complaints and whistleblowing policies. Its work has largely been to receive officers' reports and - in a few instances - to consider alleged inappropriate behaviour by members. However, the Chair is currently attending council and committee meetings to observe member behaviour. This is a positive step. It is intended that the Monitoring Officer will discuss with the Chair if any action is needed to improve compliance with the Code. Periodic ethical audits highlight any systemic weaknesses.
old 37, new 38		Added: The Committee can provide a useful structure for learning from the experiences and cases in other authorities. In particular it can provide support to officers when faced with a highly politicised environment.
old 57, new 58	Support to outside organisations, including where sponsorship (for example, Tranmere) and receipt of 'gifts'	Added: It is important that such disclosures are registered to avoid any perception by members of the public that decision makers could be unduly influenced when making a decision concerning a particular organisation.
Appendix 2	Recommendations – priority order	Priority of recommendations 2 and 4 changed from 3 to 2 to accentuate those left at 3.