BUSINESS PLAN

2012 / 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

This Business Plan expands upon the information contained in our Strategic Plan 2012/16 in which we set out our plans for the four year period. The Business Plan covers the first year of the four year period and we provide more detail about how we aim to achieve the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.

2. PURPOSE

The Standards Commission is an independent body whose purpose is to encourage high ethical standards in public life through the promotion and enforcement of Codes of Conduct for Councillors and those appointed to the Boards of Devolved Public Bodies

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2012/13 – 2015/16

The Standards Commission's strategic objectives for the four-year period are as follows:

1. To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and so encourage recognition of and respect for the Codes of Conduct by the public and other stakeholders.

2. To assist councils and public bodies to achieve the highest ethical standards of conduct and ensure the guidance and support provided by the Standards Commission responds to their needs.

3. To enforce the Codes of Conduct impartially, timeously and in accordance with legislation.

4. To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance, best value, joint working and working in partnership and to secure continuous improvement.

4. BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

We set out below our business objectives for the year 2012/13. Each objective is shown under the main strategic objective to which it contributes. However, a number of our business objectives will contribute to more than one of our strategic objectives.

1. To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and so encourage recognition of and respect for the Codes of Conduct by the public and other stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
Regular dialogue with stakeholders to monitor understanding of and respect for the Codes amongst the public, councillors and members of public bodies		Sept – post May election regional events for councillors	SO Conference	MO Conference
Consistent decision making by the Standards Commission in relation to breach cases and hearings	Introduction of revised Hearing Rules Legal advice to be considered before revised Rules finalised			
Engagement with and provision of advice to Scottish Ministers and the Parliament	Work with Scottish Government in reviewing the Model Code of Conduct			Mar - consideration of any end-of-year advice in light of experience, including through complaints, Hearings, dialogue and surveys
Promotion of the role and content of the Codes in Scottish public life	Action: June – further improve and enhance website	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
The details of hearings held that will be published in the Standards Commission's Annual Report		July – publication in Annual Report		Action: Mar - collation of material for inclusion in Annual Report 2012/13
Assessment of the level of awareness and attitudes to the Codes that will be submitted annually to Scottish Ministers and the Parliament	Development of programme, including public awareness during 2nd quarter	July – publication in Annual Report of views from MO/SO survey Survey of public awareness of Codes via Survey Monkey	Analysis of survey results	Implementation of survey results
The development of a programme of survey work, including councillors, members and the public and publication of its results	Development of programme, including public awareness during 2nd quarter	July – publication in Annual Report of views from MO/SO survey Survey of public awareness of Codes via Survey Monkey	Analysis of survey results	Implementation of survey results

2. To assist councils and public bodies to achieve the highest ethical standards of conduct and ensure the guidance and support provided by the Standards Commission responds to their needs.

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
A review of complaints referred to the Public Standards Commissioner ("PSC") and information obtained from other sources to identify issues for guidance and advise to councils or public bodies	Ongoing in terms of consideration of PSC's Notes of Decisions	Sept – post May election events for councillors	Review and action	Review and action
Giving support to the development of education programmes to help councils and public bodies provide training for their councillors and members	Contribution to Councils' post May election events for councillors as appropriate. (i) Preparation of case studies and publication in early May	Contribution to Councils' post May election events for councillors as appropriate	Development of more advanced case studies and publication	
Provision of guidance on the interpretation of the Codes to the staff and members of councils and public bodies	On-going in terms of provision of ad hoc advice		Review Guidance for councillors and local authorities in light of experience and local authority events	
Publication of Standards Commission findings in any breach hearings for the information of relevant organisations i.e. all councils or public bodies	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Periodic consultation on the Standards Commission's Guidance document			Consultation if more than minor changes identified following review (see above)	
Liaison with relevant organisations to identify the needs of councils and public bodies to help focus the advice and support provided by the Standards Commission	Attendance at Leaders' meeting (COSLA)			
The analysis of trends in complaints to the PSC and an account of any guidance or advise issued	Ongoing consideration of PSC's reports at Commission meetings and	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
	PSC stats, including additional requested information			
The recorded programme of visits to councils and public bodies		Sept – post May election events for councillors		
Advice has been provided within 20 working days of receipt of request	Ongoing provision of advice within timescale	Ongoing provision of advice within timescale	Ongoing provision of advice within timescale	Ongoing provision of advice within timescale
The annual review of the Communication Strategy and its implementation in 2011, with annual review	April – review			
The review of results from surveys conducted each year and their response rates	Publication of responses to MO/SO Survey	Inclusion in Annual Report		
The recorded programme of assistance to Councils through the attendance at events run by the Standards Commission and others to aid newly elected councillors following the 2012 elections in terms of their understanding of the Councillors' Code of Conduct		Sept – post May election events		

3. To enforce the Codes of Conduct impartially, timeously and in accordance with legislation.

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
The Standards Commission will act in accordance with the Ethical Standards in Public Lift etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
The Standards Commission will undertake its statutory adjudication role, in relation to alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, wholly independently of the PSC	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
If deemed necessary, the Standards Commission will direct the PSC to carry out further investigations in potential breach of code cases	Ongoing consideration of PSC's reports to consider if direction required	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
The Standards Commission will determine whether or not to hold a hearing where a potential breach has been reported by the PSC	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
In the event of a finding of a breach of the relevant Code, the Hearing Panel will determine the sanction to be applied	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Cases will have been listed for hearing to commence within 12 weeks of the decision to hold a Hearing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Relevant parties will have been informed of the hearing within 15 working days	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
The outcome of hearings will have been made available on the website within 25 working days of the hearing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
A substantive response to correspondence will have been given within 20 days of receipt	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
A substantive response to complaints will have been given within 20 days of receipt	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

4. To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance, best value, joint working and working in partnership and to secure continuous improvement.

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
Collective leadership by the Standards Commission in the promotion of ethical standards in Scotland		July – Assessment included in Annual Report		
Commitment to the Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland (duty, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect)		July – Assessment included in Annual Report	Dec (C) assessment of contribution to principles	
Adoption of good practice and governance in the oversight of the Standards Commission's finances and other resources	Development of programme of internal audit 1 Apr – commencement of shared services with Scottish Parliament re invoices and payments. Apr A&A – proposals paper for benchmarking Implementation of any agreed recommendations in Internal Audit of Financial Procedures. Agree internal audit programme 2012/13	Benchmarking activity against other public bodies' strategic planning and objective setting	Oct A&A – conclusions paper for benchmarking	Implementation of agreed recommendations
Identification and taking forward of opportunities to work jointly or in partnership with other public bodies in order to ensure efficient delivery of the Standards Commissions' role	Briefing note for Improvement Service's website 2 April – implementation of shared services with Scottish Parliament (invoices, payments and	Briefing note for Improvement Service's website.		

(C) – Commission Meeting (A&A) – Accounting and Audit Committee (HR) – Human Resources Committee

OBJECTIVE	1st quarter APR – JUN	2nd quarter JUL - SEPT	3rd quarter OCT – DEC	4th quarter JAN - MAR
	MIS reports)			
The annual appraisal of Standards Commission's Members	To be undertaken during first quarter			
A satisfactory annual report from the Standards Commission's auditors	Agreement on requirements of external auditors (workplan and timetable to be confirmed)			
An Annual Report that will identify how the Standards Commission has delivered best value in the preceding year and shows what steps have been taken to increase the levels of joint working and partnership undertaken	Small underspend 2011/12 Move to increase joint working 2011/12 – Scottish Parliament in particular	Inclusion in Annual Report Reflected in budget submission		
An annual assessment of the Standard Commission's commitment to the Equality Duty principles			Assessment for inclusion in Annual Report	