



INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

## **BUSINESS PLAN**

**2016 / 2017**

## Strategic Objective 1: 'GUIDANCE & SUPPORT'

To provide guidance and support to assist councillors and members of devolved public bodies to act in accordance with the Codes of Conduct.

Actions (Taken From Strategic Plan)	Activities 2016/17	Measurement / Target
1. Producing, issuing and promoting relevant, accessible and comprehensive guidance and educational materials for councillors and members of devolved public bodies.	Record & develop activity plan for any areas where the need for additional guidance or advice is identified or requested through enquiries, training events, workshops, or trends in complaints made to the CESPLS and Hearings.	Implement actions identified within timescales agreed in any activity plan. Ongoing / continuous evaluation & monitoring
2. Providing training and advice to councillors and members of devolved public bodies on the Codes of Conduct and the standards expected of them.	Provision of advice when requested.	Record enquiries and report on response performance against timescales outlined in the Service Charter. Ongoing and Q4
3. Supporting induction and training programmes to help councils and public bodies promote awareness and understanding of the Codes of Conduct among their councillors and members.	a) Provision of tailored training events to councillors and members of devolved public bodies.	Respond to any requests for training events within one month. Upload any advice or educational material within two weeks of being agreed and presentations from training events within two weeks of delivery. Ongoing continuous evaluation & monitoring
	b) Development and promotion of Education & Resources facility on website.	Explore possibility of training partnerships with COSLA and the Improvement Service. Then create and implement action plan of training modules and advice notes (based on specific and targeted areas of the Codes) to be issued and published on website. Q1 for creation of action plan and Ongoing
4. Engaging and consulting with councils, devolved public bodies, the CESPLS and other stakeholders to identify trends and emerging issues to ensure guidance and training materials continue to be fit for purpose and meet evolving requirements and emerging developments	a) Hold workshop for MO's and SO's to discuss impact of guidance and any issues / trends/ areas of concern.	Annual workshops with MO's and SO's. Obtain feedback from councillors and MO's on revised Guidance on Councillors' Code of Conduct. Obtain feedback from SO's and members of DPB's on advice notes Q2 for MO's Q3 for SO's

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Actions (Taken From Strategic Plan)	Activities 2016/17	Measurement / Target
	b) Change / issue guidance and dispensations if and when required / appropriate.	Implement actions identified within timescales agreed in any activity plan. Ongoing
	c) Identify and develop relationships with key stakeholders including Scottish Government, Audit Scotland, CoSLA, SOLAR & SOLACE in order to benchmark best practice and develop joint working opportunities.	Create contact plan of meetings / contact between ED and key stakeholders. Q1 This to include: Annual meeting with SOLACE office bearers Q2 Annual meeting with SOLAR office bearers Q4 Annual meeting ED and COSLA CEO Q3 Regular contact between ED and SG. Ongoing Regular meetings between ED and CESPLS Ongoing Annual meeting SCS and Audit Scotland Q3
5. Ensuring adjudication decisions taken by the Standards Commission are well-reasoned and consistent.	Analysis of written Hearings decisions to ensure all are well-reasoned and consistent.	Draft written decision to be circulated to Hearing Panel Members within five working days of conclusion of Hearing. Formal annual review undertaken at SCS meeting in Q4. Ongoing and Q4

## Strategic Objective 2: 'PROMOTION'

To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and recognition and understanding of the Standards Commission's role among the public and stakeholders.

Actions (Taken from Strategic Plan)	Activities 2016/17	Measurement / Target
6. Promoting of the role of the Codes of Conduct in public life, including proactively engaging with the media about the role of the Standards Commission.	Issue press releases based on standard template following all Hearings and continue to proactively engage with the media about the role of the Standards Commission to ensure accurate information is conveyed timeously.	Issue press release on any major activity or changes to ethical standards framework. <b>Ongoing</b>  Expand and update database of media outlets to receive information about Hearings to be held and Hearings press releases on conclusion of Hearings. Track and record press coverage of Standards Commission activity and Hearings. <b>Create tracking sheet Q1 and Ongoing</b>
7. Providing advice on the interpretation of the Codes to members of the public and stakeholders, including officers of councils and staff of devolved public bodies.	Respond to queries and requests for dispensations.	Provide accurate information within timescales outlined in service charter. <b>Ongoing</b>
8. Engaging with, and providing support, to the Scottish Government, Scottish Ministers and the Parliament on matters relating to the Ethical Standards Framework.	a) Engage with SG if issues /trends emerge from enquiries, dispensation requests, training events, changes to organisations within the SCS's jurisdiction and workshops.	Undertake research and evaluation if issues and trends arise; produce /update advice notes and education resources; and, if appropriate, recommend changes to the Codes of Conduct. <b>Ongoing</b>
	b) Produce new guidance if required if public bodies added to Schedule 3 to the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.	Participate in any consultation on Codes of Conduct and produce guidance when required. <b>Ongoing</b>
9. Actively participating in any consultation which impacts on the Ethical Standards Framework and standards in public life.	Provide and share responses to any consultation that impacts on the Ethical Standards Framework and standards in public life.	Provide response within any deadline provided. <b>Ongoing</b>
10. Publishing the Standards Commission's decisions and issuing press releases about the outcomes of Hearings.	Publish details of Hearings and decisions made, on the SCS website and in the Annual Report.	Publish details about forthcoming Hearings on website within five working days of notification letters being issued. <b>Ongoing</b>  Issue press releases within one working day of the conclusion of all Hearings. <b>Ongoing</b> Publish details of Hearings and outcomes in Annual Report. <b>Q2</b>

<b>Strategic Objective 3: 'ENFORCEMENT'</b> <b>To enforce the Codes of Conduct in a fair, impartial and efficient manner.</b>		
<b>Actions (Taken from Strategic Plan)</b>	<b>Activities 2016/17</b>	<b>Measurement / Target</b>
11. Acting in accordance with governing legislation and the Standard Commission's Hearing Process Guide and Rules.	a) All actions taken in accordance with process and timescales detailed within the Hearing Rules and Process Guide.	Adhere to Rules and timescales. Report on adherence to timescales in Annual Report. <b>Ongoing and Q2</b>
	b) Timeous publication of Hearing decisions on website.	Publish decisions on website within 25 working days of conclusion of Hearing. <b>Ongoing</b>
12. Undertaking the statutory adjudication role in relation to alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct.	a) Make recommendation to Scottish Government on potential revisions to legislation and Codes of Conduct	Recommendation following review of efficacy of legislation in Q4 of 2015/16 and potential upcoming consultation on changes to Councillors' Code of Conduct. <b>Q1</b>
13. Making consistent, fair, impartial and transparent decisions in relation to whether to hold Hearings, whether a breach of the Codes of Conduct is established and, if so, the sanction to be applied.	Review of decisions made and sanctions imposed to check for consistency, objectivity, fairness and transparency.	Formal annual review undertaken at SCS meeting in Q4. <b>Q4</b>
14. Obtaining feedback and undertaking regular reviews of the Hearings Process Guide and Rules to ensure Hearings are run efficiently and are transparent, accessible and fair.	a) Conduct post Hearing analysis to consider effectiveness of Hearing Process Guide and Rules and standard correspondence.	Include as formal agenda item at each SCS meeting which follows a SCS Hearing. ED to update and publish Rules within one month of changes being agreed <b>Ongoing</b>
	b) Handle all correspondence including feedback and complaints about the service provided in accordance with timescales and procedures detailed within the SCS Service Charter.	ED to action any improvements/ changes identified from any feedback or upheld complaints. <b>Ongoing</b>
15. Sharing learning, experience and knowledge gained from enforcement activities to positively influence future behaviours and conduct.	Publication of learning points from Hearings in professional briefings, guidance and training materials.	Publish professional briefings quarterly and update training materials with any learning points. <b>Ongoing and Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4</b>

**Strategic Objective 4: 'GOVERNANCE**  
**To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance and best value.**

Actions (Taken from Strategic Plan)	Activities 2016/17	Measurement / Target
16. Collective leadership by the Standards Commission in the promotion of ethical standards in Scotland.	a) Work with CESPLS to identify improvements to policies and procedures for handling complaints and managing Hearings.	Monthly meetings ED and CESPLS. Quarterly meetings between SCS and CESPLS. Monthly and Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4
	b) Share intelligence gathered with the Scottish Government on any issues relating to the ethical standards framework that have arisen or have been identified as likely to arise.	ED to maintain regular contact with Scottish Government and to discuss any issues as they are identified. Ongoing
17. Committing to fulfil equalities obligations and duties and also to act in accordance with the Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland.	a) Undertake equalities impact assessments on any new / substantially revised policy / practice.	Ensure assessment undertaken before any policy in force and published and within two weeks of any existing policy or practice being substantially revised. Ongoing
	b) Undertake annual assessment of contribution to Public Life principles.	Completion of Members' self -assessment and inclusion in annual report. Q1
18. Developing the skills and competencies of Members and staff of the Standards Commission through a programme of continuous professional development, knowledge management and shared learning.	a) Update induction programme in light of feedback from Member appointed in 2015.	Obtain feedback and update induction programme and materials. Q1
	b) Share feedback about outcome and issues arising / procedural matters from each Hearing held.	Include as formal agenda item at each SCS meeting. Ongoing
	c) Create personal development programme for each member of staff.	To be created at annual appraisal in Q1 and implemented by end of Q4. Q1 and Q4
19. Adopting good practice and governance in the oversight of the Standards Commission's finances and other resources.	a) Complete Annual Accounts (2015/16).	Unqualified accounts to be laid before 31.08.16. Q2

**Strategic Objective 4: 'GOVERNANCE**  
**To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance and best value.**

Actions (Taken from Strategic Plan)	Activities 2016/17	Measurement / Target
	b) Implement action points arising from internal and external audits.	Programme of audits and associated improvement actions to be completed. Q4
20. Identifying and taking forward opportunities to work jointly or in partnership with other public bodies in order to ensure the efficient delivery of the Standards Commission's role, to eliminate duplication and to obtain best value in terms of shared services.	a) Participate in Commissioners and Ombudsman's Group to share experiences and best practice.	Attendance at meetings held three times per year. Q2, Q3 and Q4
	b) Continue and develop shared service arrangements with SPCB.	Regular contact with SPCB and annual formal meeting. Ongoing and Q1
21. Making good use of resources and striving for operational efficiency and continuous improvement.	a) Review and monitor corporate policies and procedures on rolling basis.	Create Control Sheet and record in workplan activities. Ongoing
	b) Report on how best value delivered in Annual Report.	Include section on best value in annual Report Q2
	c) Record progress against strategic objectives and business plan	Quarterly review of progress against business plan. Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4  Review of Risk Register at Audit & Risk Committee meetings Q1, Q2 & Q4