

# **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**10th October 2013**

## **MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mark Bullivant
Portfolio Holder consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report sets out the position in relation to key matters which are of relevance to the Standards Committee.
- 1.2 A report of this nature is presented to each meeting of the Committee to ensure that Members are kept updated as to any relevant developments.
- 1.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report will be reported orally by Officers at the meeting.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Committee note the report and comment on any aspects of this, as appropriate.**

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

#### **Legal Implications**

- 3.2 The Localism Act became law on 15th November 2011. Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a new standards regime effective from 1st July 2012. The Act places a requirement on authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted (with voting rights) Members of an authority. The Act also requires the authority to have in place arrangements under which allegations that either a district or parish councillor has breached his or her Code of Conduct can be investigated, together with arrangements under which decisions on such allegations can be made. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)

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Regulations 2012 were laid before Parliament on 8th June 2012 and also came into force on 1st July 2012.

## **Service / Operational Implications**

### Member Complaints

- 3.3 During the period July to September 2013 no Member complaints were received.

### Member Training

- 3.4 The Member Development Steering Group has been meeting regularly to review and plan training and development for Members.
- 3.5 Over the last 6 months training sessions have been held on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. 17 Councillors attended this and a further session has been arranged as a number of Councillors who wished to attend were unable to go to the original event.
- 3.6 Refresher sessions have been held for members of the Licensing and Standards Committees and the Audit Board. The external auditors, Grant Thornton, have also delivered training on the importance of the Audit function in governance, which was well received.
- 3.7 Future plans include training on Overview and Scrutiny, outside bodies and a review of planning pre-application training.

### Council approval of Standards Committee recommendation – updated Arrangements for Handling Standards Complaints against Members

- 3.8 At its meeting on 25th September 2013 full Council agreed the recommendation of the 11th July 2013 Standards Committee for the Arrangements for Managing Standards Complaints against Members to be updated to include a small change in relation to complaints referred to the Police by the Monitoring Officer. This amendment was agreed in advance of a separate review by the Standards Committee of the new standards regime and complaint Arrangements at this evening's meeting (Agenda Item 7 refers).

## **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.9 Any process for managing standards of behaviour for elected and co-opted councillors must be accessible to the public. It is therefore proposed that an

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impact assessment will be carried out on the complaints process when established, to ensure accessibility.

- 3.10 In addition, it is proposed that the new arrangements will be publicised on the Council's website and that Officers will work to ensure that members of the public are made aware of the process for making a complaint through all existing community engagement events.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and
- Risk of complaints about elected Members.

## **5. APPENDICES**

None

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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