

Subject:	Standards Committee – Annual Report 2011/12	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Standards Committee Council	Date:	6 th March 2012 21 st March 2012
Report of:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Portfolio Holder:	Customers, Legal and Licensing
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That the content of the report and the work of the Standards Committee during 2011/12 is noted.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide members with a brief overview of the work carried out by the Standards Committee during the 2011/12 municipal year. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impacts directly on the following corporate priority:

- **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 The Annual Report informs Council of the work undertaken by the Standards Committee throughout the municipal year in relation to the role of the committee. The main role of the Standards Committee is to:

- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct.
- Advise the Council on the adoption or revision of its Code of Conduct.
- To monitor and advise the Council about the operation of its Code of Conduct in light of best practice, changes in the law and guidance from Standards for England.
- To enable all members of the Council/Town Council to have access to training actively promoted in all aspects of the relevant Code of Conduct, and to ensure that members are aware of the standards expected of them under the Code.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 There are no material financial implications.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 There are no specific legal implications.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

9.1 Chair of the Standards Committee.

9.2 The Standards Committee met on the 6th March and made the following recommendation to Council: *That Council notes the contents of the report and the work of the Standards Committee during 2011/12.*

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Standards Committee plays an important role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct within the Council.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2011/12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 June 2011 saw the re-election of Mrs Irene Divine as Chair of the Standards Committee and Mr Andrew Neville was re-elected as Vice Chair. Mr Keith Pilkington continued as a new independent member of the Committee. Councillor David Barnes and Councillor Mellor were appointed as Town Council representatives.
- 1.2 Sadly, a former Town Council representative of the Standards Committee, Mr Jimmy Grogan passed away in May 2011. The Committee were grateful to Mr Grogan for all his support, hard work and contributions during his time on the Standards Committee.
- 1.3 The work of the Standards Committee has continued to be challenging, with the impending abolition of Standards for England and implementation of the Localism Act. The committee has continued to follow a 'business as usual' approach. The Committee, and ultimately, Full Council will decide on a new approach to Standards in due course.

2. ABOLITION OF STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND

- 2.1 Standards for England ceased to investigate complaints on 31st January 2012 and will be formally abolished in 2012.

3. THE LOCALISM ACT

- 3.1 Regular updates and reports have been taken to the Standards Committee during 2010 and 2011 which have provided members with information on the progress of the Localism Bill through Parliament and the House of Lords, through to its Royal Assent.
- 3.2 Committee arrangements are awaiting further guidance, however councils will be asked to:-
 - Adopt a Code of Conduct.
 - Confirm a Hearings Procedure.

4. COMPLAINTS UPDATE

- 4.1 During the 2011/12 year (as at 29th February 2012), the Standards Committee has dealt with 6 complaints.
- 4.2 Of the complaints received 2 resulted in an investigation. Of those investigated 1 resulted in a finding of no breach of the Code of Conduct and the other is still under investigation.
- 4.3 The Standards Committee receives updates on complaints at each committee.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 The Standards Committee has continued to carry out work as per the Work Programme below:-

5.2

Item	Proposed Date for Consideration	Been to Committee
Standards Complaints Update	Every meeting	Yes
Localism Bill/Act Update	Every meeting	Yes
Training Update	June 2011	Yes
Co-opted Members and Voting Rights	June 2011	Yes
Update on Members' and Officers' Registers of Interests	June 2011	Yes
Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter for the year ended 31 st March 2011 and Annual Complaints Review	September 2011	Yes
Recommendations from Internal Audit	September 2011	Yes, to return for further consideration
Anti-Bribery Act 2010	September 2011	Yes
Localism Act – Update	November 2011	Yes
Training Update	November 2011	Yes
Recommendations from Internal Audit	November 2011	Yes
Standards Committee Annual Report	March 2012	Yes
Draft Code of Conduct	Defer until decision on future of Standards Committee made.	N/A
Review of Protocols for Non-Elected Independent Members	Defer until decision on future of Standards Committee made.	N/A
Draft Standards Handbook	Defer until decision on future of Standards Committee made.	N/A

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Standards Committee has continued to carry out its work in challenging circumstances and will ensure that any transitional or new arrangements are implemented in a smooth and efficient manner.