

## REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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The Standards Committee met on 25 April 2012.

**Present** Mrs C Swan (Independent Chairman),  
Mr T Elliott and Mrs A Holden (Independent members)  
Councillors Healy and Stogdon

### 1. Annual Report of the Standards Committee

1.1 In July 2007 the revised Code of Conduct was adopted by the Council, and all Members were offered training on the new Code. Additionally, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced changes to ethical standards, which placed additional responsibility on the Standards Committee locally for dealing with complaints of breach of the Code of Conduct.

1.2 In December 2008 the Standards Committee agreed the assessment criteria that would provide additional support and guidance for the assessment and review Sub-Committees when considering complaints.

1.3 Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 there was one complaint received against a Member of the County Council (see Appendix 1). The complaint was considered by the Assessment Sub Committee. It was decided that there may have been a potential breach of the Code but that further investigation was not appropriate as the public interest in investigating the complaint would be outweighed by the cost and resources that would be likely to be involved. The Sub Committee decided that the matter should be referred to the Monitoring Officer for other action.

1.4 Following a request for a review of a decision made by the Assessment Sub Committee in March 2011, the Review Sub Committee met once during 2011/12. The Review Sub Committee decided that no action should be taken in relation to the alleged misconduct.

1.5 It is considered that the standards of conduct among Members and co-opted members of the Council remain high and maintaining good standards is taken seriously. There was only one case considered by the Assessment Sub-Committee in the period covered by this report, in comparison to two in 2010/11 and 4 in 2009/10.

### Applications for Dispensation

1.6 In limited circumstances, Members can apply in writing to the Standards Committee for dispensations to take part in business that they would otherwise have been unable to participate in through having prejudicial interests. During 2011/12 there were no applications for dispensations.

1.7 All dispensations are entered on the register of Members' interests and remain there for the appropriate period, normally for 4 years from the date on which they were granted, or (if shorter) until the date fixed by the Committee granting the dispensation.

### Register of Members' Interests

1.8 The Monitoring Officer is required to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members of the Council. All Members have completed and returned their registers and are reminded every six months of the need to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes. The registers are available for public inspection and are available on the Council's website.

1.9 A register of Gifts and Hospitality is also maintained by the Monitoring Officer. During the period of this report nine Members have had cause to register one or more gifts and hospitality received with an estimated value of £25 or more.

1.10 There is an ongoing requirement to keep the information up to date. Councillors must within 28 days of becoming aware of any new registerable personal interest or change to any registered interest, give written notification to the Monitoring Officer.

1.11 The Committee agreed that members of the County Council should be required to update and sign their financial and other interest returns on an annual basis and proposed that this could be done on the day of the annual County Council meeting.

### Training

1.12 Members were offered training on the Code of Conduct in June 2009. In the past the Committee has acknowledged the need for further Code of Conduct training for Councillors. Training will be offered to councillors regarding the changes to the standards regime and the new Local Code of Conduct once the Code, local assessment criteria etc have been agreed.

### Local Standards Framework and Code of Conduct

1.13 On 27 February 2012 the Committee was consulted and expressed views on the draft Code of Conduct (see the report of the Governance Committee under a separate agenda item). At its meeting on 25 April 2012 the Committee received an update on the progress of the changes to the Standards Framework and its views were sought on the draft Codes produced by the Local Government Association and CLG

1.12 The Committee **recommends** the County Council to –

- ☆ agree the Annual Report

Christine Swan  
Chairman

25 April 2012

## STANDARDS

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### APPENDIX 1

#### Complaints received by the Standards Committee 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012

Reference	Type and Date of Sub Committee	Complainant	Summary of Complaint	Assessment Outcome	Review Outcome	Resolved
SC.001.11	Review 12 May 2011	Member of the public	Disrespectful and failed to address points raised in an email	No action	Original decision upheld	Yes
SC.002.11	Assessment 27 July 2011	Member of the public	Disrespectful and failed to respond to letters	Referred to Monitoring Officer for other	Not applicable	Yes

