

**Body:** **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Date:** **24 September 2014**

**Subject:** **Members and Standards: an update**

**Report Of:** **LAWYER TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER**

**Ward(s)** All

**Purpose** To assist the Audit and Governance Committee in fulfilling its obligations in relation to member standards.

**Recommendations:** That the Committee note the following:

- The information supplied to it regarding complaints against members
- Other relevant information including an update on Standards-related matters

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## **1.0 Background**

1.1 Members will recall their longstanding invitation to the Monitoring Officer to provide quarterly updates on Standards-related matters.

## **2.0 Complaints**

2.1 No new formal complaints against members have been received in during this quarter. As none remain outstanding from previous quarters, no complaints await determination at time of writing.

## **3.1 Dispensations**

3.2 No dispensations have been applied for or issued since the last quarterly Report.

## **4.1 Member training**

4.1 No dedicated in-house training on Standards-related issues has taken place during this quarter.

## **5.0 Update on Standards related matters**

5.1 Members will have noted that the general question of how best to regulate the conduct of elected officials has remained on the radar. The Parliamentary Standards Committee's enquiry into the standards system in the House of Commons is ongoing while the House of Lords Privileges and Standards Committee has recently recommended a tightening up of the rules relating to its members.

5.2 In addition the Committee on Standards in Public Life's 3<sup>rd</sup> report on Standards in Public Life has been republished this year. Having first been published in 1997, not all of its recommendations remain live. However it is an indication of ongoing interest – interest kept alive by debate between commentators on local government – in the subject of member conduct. While no legislative change is currently planned, it is to be expected that the Standards regime will be kept under review by future Parliaments.

## **6.0 Consultation**

6.1 There has been no consultation.

## **7.0 Resource Implications**

7.1 None.

## **8.0 Financial**

8.1 None.

## **9.0 Staffing**

9.1 None.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1 Authorities must have in place arrangements to monitor member conduct and to promote effective decision-making. It also a requirement that steps be taken to promote high standards of conduct. This report aims to assist this Committee in discharging its responsibilities in this regard.

**Victoria Simpson**

**LAWYER TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER**

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Previous reports and minutes of the Committee and Panel.

The Localism Act and related legislation

Resources including articles in the Local Government Lawyer and bulletins issued by Lawyers in Local Government ; the Standards Exchange; also relevant resources on the Department of Communities and Local Government website