



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Standards Board – 7 December 2011

Activity Report of the Monitoring Officer

Purpose of report

This report provides a brief update on current Monitoring Officer activity and ethical matters as requested by the board for each meeting.

1.0 Parish and Town Activity

- 1.1 Since the board met on 21 September 2011, 6 enquiries have been recorded from parish and town clerks and councillors, district councillors and the general public, mainly seeking advice on personal and prejudicial interests.
- 1.2 Changes to the town and parish council registers of interest continue as vacancies arise and are filled. There are currently 42 vacancies around the district.
- 1.3 At the time of writing this report there were 41 outstanding Register of Interest forms for Parish Councillors. The appropriate Parish Clerks had been contacted to remind those Councillors to return the forms to the Monitoring Officer.

2.0 Complaints

- 2.1 Unfortunately it has not proved possible to complete the outstanding complaint requiring Monitoring Officer action since the last meeting. In addition one new complaint has been received. An Assessment Sub-Committee will be convened to hear this complaint as soon as possible.

3 The Localism Act and Training

- 3.1 The Localism Bill received Royal Assent on Tuesday 16 November, somewhat sooner than expected. However the changes to the Standards Rules do not come into immediate effect but are subject to further regulation by the Secretary of State. It is anticipated that they will not take effect until 1 April 2012. The provisions in respect to pre-determination will come into effect on 15 January.
- 3.2 Significant changes to the future arrangements in relation to the Councillor Code of Conduct and related Standards matters were made just before the third and final reading of the Localism Bill. These changes, and the final provisions, are explored in more detail in another report on the agenda. East Northamptonshire Council will now have to determine the content of the Code of Conduct it wants to adopt and how it will deal with complaints of breaches of this Code.
- 3.3 A training session for Town and Parish Councils was held on 29 November to provide an update on the proposed changes to the planning rules and infrastructure. Those attending were made aware of the main changes contained within the Act
- 3.4 Further guidance and training on all changes will be provided to both District and Town & Parish Councillors before the changes take effect in 2012

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000 ,Local Government and Public Involvement in Heath Act 2007 and Localism Act 2011 ----- Other considerations:				
Background Papers: None					
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Date: 25 November 2011					
CFO		MO		CX	

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