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

Attachment(s)
None

1 General Matters

1.1 Since the board met on 18 November 2009, 19 enquiries have been recorded from Parish and Town Council Clerks and Councillors, District Councillors, and the general public, seeking advice on personal and prejudicial interests and code of conduct matters. Potential conflicts of interest and vacancies at Parish Council level are a particular concern to some Clerks. There are currently 25 vacant Parish and Town Council seats.

1.2 The annual update of Registration of Interest forms continues. A report on the current position will be presented to the next meeting

2 Training

2.1 East Northamptonshire Local Councils Update - Local Council Clerks were invited to a Parish Update evening on 21 January hosted by ENC & Ncalc at the Council Offices in Thrapston. The event included feedback from the internal auditors, information on the power of wellbeing, meeting procedures, declaring interests and an opportunity to ask the experts on the panel.

2.2 Training for new members of the Standards Board took place on 16 December 2009, to bring them to the same level of awareness of existing Members who received in-depth training on the framework for the Code of Conduct and the Complaints Process up to Assessment on 18 November. A further training session will take place after this meeting to cover investigations and hearings.

2.3 A training session for Town and Parish Councillors on the Code of Conduct, aimed at new Councillors and those who would like a refresher session, will be held at East Northampton Council on 8 February. About 15 Councillors have so far expressed an interest. The Monitoring Officer has also be asked to visit Nassington Parish Council

3 Standards for England

3.1 The return for the quarter ended 31 December 2010 has been made to the Standards for England. The key change reported was the closure of the most recent complaint following delivery of Refresher Code of Conduct Training to Councillors of the Council concerned.

3.2 There has been no further news of progress on the revised Code of Conduct at time of writing this report. It therefore seems unlikely that it will be implemented before the General Election.
**Implications:**

**Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy**
- Good Quality of Life
- Good Value for Money
- Effective Partnership Working
- Effective Management
- Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
- Other: Ethical Framework/Governance Arrangements

**Financial**
- There are no financial implications at this stage
- There will be financial implications – see paragraph
- There is provision within existing budget
- Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date
- Decisions may have potential for income generation

**Risk Management**
- An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks
- Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference
  - inherent risk score
  - residual risk score

**Staff**
- There are no additional staffing implications
- Additional staff will be required – see paragraph

**Equalities and Human Rights**
- There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications
- There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph

**Legal**
- Power: Local Government Act 2000; The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Other considerations: Standards Committee (Further Provisions) Regulations 2009

**Background Papers:**

**Person Originating Report:** Sharn Matthews, Monitoring Officer, 01832 742108, smatthews@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

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(Committee Report Normal Rev. 19)