



Standards Board - 7 April 2010

Activity Report of the Monitoring Officer

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

1.0 Parish and Town Council Activity

- 1.1 Since the Board met on 3 February 2010, 10 enquiries have been recorded from Parish and Town Council Clerks and Councillors, District Councillors and the general public, seeking advice on the complaints process, or personal and prejudicial interests and code of conduct matters.
- 1.2 Changes to the Town and Parish Council Registers of Interest continue as vacancies arise and are filled. There are currently 27 vacancies around the district.

2.0 Training

- 2.1 On 8 February the Monitoring Officer held an open session for Code of Conduct Training at East Northamptonshire House aimed at new Town or Parish Councillors, of which 15 attended.
- 2.2 The Monitoring Officer attended Parish Council meetings at Nassington on 10 February and Islip on 16 February at the request of those Councils. She gave a brief presentation on declarations of interest and answered questions regarding the Code of Conduct.

3.0 Complaints

- 3.1 The Assessment Sub-Committee met on 17 March following a complaint received by the Monitoring Officer. The decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee was for other action to be taken by the Monitoring Officer. A fuller report will be made to the Board once the other action has been completed.

4.0 Standards for England

- 4.1 Standards for England have confirmed that there will be no change to the Code of Conduct for Members proposed until after the General Election.
- 4.2 The Annual Assembly of Standards Committees is scheduled to take place in Birmingham on 18 and 19 October 2010. Sessions will include:
 - Use of Social Media and possible implications for the Code of Conduct
 - Development of a proactive work programme
 - How to deal with 'challenging behaviour'
- 4.3 It is not proposed to book for the conference until after the General Election in case of possible legislative changes which would render attendance unnecessary. However it would be helpful at this stage to have an indication of possible attendees so that booking can proceed. Previously up to three members of the Board have attended, together with the Monitoring Officer. Consideration may be given to whether at this

time of budgetary restraint a lower number might attend this year.

4.4 The final quarterly return for 2009/10 will be submitted in early April.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to nominate possible delegates for the Annual Assembly should this take place later this year.

| Implications: | |
|--|---|
| Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy | |
| Good Quality of Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Good Value for Money | <input type="checkbox"/> High Quality Service Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Effective Partnership Working | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Community Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Effective Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of our Customers and Communities <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: Ethical Framework | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Financial | There are no financial implications at this stage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | There will be financial implications – see paragraph 4.2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | There is provision within existing budget <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Decisions may have potential for income generation <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Risk Management | An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - residual risk score - <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff | There are no additional staffing implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Additional staff will be required – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equalities and Human Rights | There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Legal | Power: Local Government Act 2000 |
| | Other considerations: |
| Background Papers: | |
| Person Originating Report: Sharn Matthews, Monitoring Officer, 01832 742108, smatthews@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk | |
| Date: 30/3/10 | |
| CFO | MO |
| | CX |

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)