



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Standards Board – 6 April 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

Attachment(s)

1.0 Parish and Town Activity

- 1.1 Since the board met on 2 February 2011, 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, personal and prejudicial interests and other 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 18 vacancies around the district. The majority of these are unlikely to be filled before the elections due to be held on 6 May.
- 1.3 It appears that more town and parish council seats are likely to be contested in May. Dates are expected to be agreed shortly with NCALC in relation to the joint sessions on the current Code of Conduct for all new councillors.

2.0 Complaints

- 2.1 The Assessment Sub-Committee for the complaint reported verbally at the last Committee has now been held. The complaint was referred for 'other action' and the appropriate meeting is being organised with the Town Council concerned.
- 2.2 Of the other two complaints noted in the last Activity Report, the 'other action' requested of the Monitoring Officer has been taken in both cases. In the first case the outcome has been considered by the appropriate Assessment Sub-Committee and they are content that no further action is required.
- 2.3 In the more recent case it is hoped that the appropriate Review Sub-Committee can be reconvened to consider the outcome before the Standards Board. This will enable the outcome to be reported verbally at the meeting.
- 2.4 No further formal complaints have been received.

3. Localism Bill

- 3.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any further proposals to change the Localism Bill in respect of Standards provision. The Monitoring Officer will report verbally at the Committee any updates on the position at neighbouring councils as she is attending a Northamptonshire ACSeS meeting on 25 March..
- 3.2 The letter outlining the Standard Board's view on declarations of interests by dual hatted councillors was agreed with and signed by the Chairman of the Board and the Leader of the Council. It was sent to the Secretary of State and the two local MPs. No response has yet been received.

4. **Equality and Diversity Implications**

4.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. However it is clear that the council's constitution and other policies and procedures will have to be amended once the Localism Bill is finalised.

6. **Risk Management**

6.1 There are no material risks arising from this report.

7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report

8.0 **Corporate Outcomes**

8.1 This report fulfils the following corporate outcomes:

- Good reputation

9. **Recommendation**

9.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report with regard to the level of current advice and complaint activity (*Reason - to monitor the workloads relating to the Standards regimen and assess that the resources are appropriate to the demand*).

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: None					
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Date: 23 March 2011					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)