

<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
17 MARCH 2010	PUBLIC REPORT

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## REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *That the Committee members note the contents of this report*

## CONTENTS OF REPORT

1. This report contains the following items for consideration:
  - Update on minutes of last meeting
  - Report on any complaints made and progress on any investigations
  - Note items of interest issuing from Standards for England, Strategic Governance Board etc.
  - Progress against the work programme
  - Planning Committee voting analysis

## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

2. ***Update on minutes of last meeting***
  - 2.1 *Local Democracy Week:* Proposals have been put forward to the officer in Children's Services who is responsible for organising Local Democracy Week. This is planned for the October half term and the planning for this event is still in the early stages. The Committee will be kept updated on this matter regularly.
  - 2.2 *Induction of new members:* At the last meeting it was agreed that the Deputy Monitoring Officer would prepare an induction pack for review by the Standards Committee. This was in preparation for the election of new members in May. However this will have to be postponed to a later meeting as the Democratic Services Manager has not been available to discuss current practices. Given also that the Deputy Monitoring Officer is new to the Council it is perhaps better that this task is continued as a review of existing practices following the induction of new members in May. This will allow the Deputy Monitoring Officer to be involved in the induction of new members and report back to the Committee with details of current practice.
3. ***Complaints***
  - 3.1 At the last meeting of the Standards Committee it was agreed that the Committee would receive regular updates on any complaints or matters referred for investigation. The complaint monitoring report is attached at appendix 1.
4. ***Items of interest***
  - 4.1 *Planning Committee voting analysis:* The Planning Committee voting analysis is attached at appendix 2

4.2 *Standards for England information: Recent Updates:* Standards for England has produced a report entitled 'Local Standards 2.0 – the proportionality upgrade?' This report is the outcome of a review of the local assessment framework with emphasis on whether the complaints system is worth having or whether something different altogether may be warranted. This subject was discussed at the Standards Conference in October 2009, with one speaker raising the issue of whether the complaints process was disproportionate in terms of time and cost. The recommendations of the report are included within Chapter 8 which is appended to this report (appendix 3).

## **5. Work programme**

5.1 *Standards Committee web pages:* The Council's current web page for the Standard's Committee is included at appendix 4 to this report. It permits the public access online to the Code of Conduct and a copy of the complaint form to download.

5.2 Immediate improvements could be made to the web pages to give guidance on what the Committee can and cannot do in a similar format to the way in which information on the Scrutiny Committees is given. This may prevent unnecessary complaints about Councillors acting in their private capacity which has been an issue lately in relation to several matters referred to the Deputy Monitoring Officer as potential conduct complaints.

5.3 The Deputy Monitoring Officer has reviewed the web pages of other local authorities and has included some sample pages at appendix 5. Members of the Committee are asked to indicate if they have any particular preferences as to what might be included within their own web pages.

5.6 Members are invited to discuss any additions or revisions to the work programme at Appendix 6.

## **CONSULTATION**

6. A copy of this report is sent to each parish council and they are invited to comment upon the contents. Any response from the parishes will be verbally reported to the Committee.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Complaint monitoring report

Appendix 2: Planning Committee voting analysis

Appendix 3: Local Standards 2.0 – the proportionality upgrade? (Chapter 8)

Appendix 4: Peterborough City Council's web page for the Standards Committee

Appendix 5: Various web pages from other Councils

Appendix 6: Work programme

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None