

**CODE OF CONDUCT: STANDARDS BOARD NOTIFICATIONS**  
**(Report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In accordance with the procedure adopted by the Standards Board for England for the investigation of allegations, the Monitoring Officer has been notified of the Board's decisions in respect of –

- ◆ an allegation made against two District Councillors (Case 1); and
- ◆ allegations made against three Councillors serving on Ramsey Town Council (Cases 2 and 3).

**2. DETAILS OF CASE 1**

2.1 It had been alleged that a District Councillor had knowingly or negligently made a false statement regarding the level of reserves of the District Council in a report for a local parish council AGM and that when challenged had refused to apologise nor “put the record straight”. Similarly the complainant had expressed his dissatisfaction with an explanation given by the second Councillor on a financial irregularity in the District Council's reserves. In reaching a conclusion on the complaint, the Board noted that the complainant had received responses from both Councillors on the issues that were raised with them. Indeed, both Councillors had attempted to respond to the complainant's questions. The Board also considered that the correspondence allegedly sent by the Councillors would be an adequate response given the circumstances.

2.2 Although the Standards Board does not have jurisdiction to consider the accuracy of statements elected Members may make at meetings, in the press or in local leaflets, they did not consider, on the basis of the information provided, that there was any deliberate attempt made by the District Councillors to mislead the public. In all the circumstances, it was considered that the alleged conduct (even if it were found to have occurred) would not have involved a failure to comply with the District Council's Code of Conduct and accordingly, the Board concluded that the allegation should not be pursued.

**3. DETAILS OF CASES 2 AND 3**

3.1 The background to Cases 2 and 3 involve a proposal for a play area scheme which the complainant had objected to on the grounds of noise, traffic and the potential for anti-social behaviour. The circumstances had resulted in the submission of two separate complaints from the same individual. The first allegation related to the alleged failure of a Town Councillor to object to the scheme when he had previously raised objections on the same grounds about a local taxi firm. In respect of the involvement of the remaining two Councillors, it was alleged that they had failed to listen to their

constituents, had ignored letters, complaints and petitions and had not responded to questions, letters or suggestions.

- 3.2 The Standards Board concluded that it was legitimate for Councillors to object to certain schemes for particular reasons but not to object to others for the same reason as they may have felt those reasons did not apply or that positive aspects of the scheme outweighed the negative aspects. In these circumstances, it was considered that the alleged conduct (even if it were found to have occurred) would not have involved any failure to comply with the town council's Code of Conduct. Accordingly, it was decided that this allegation should not be investigated.
- 3.3 In terms of the allegation that two Councillors failed to listen to their constituents, the Board took the view that the information provided by the complainant was insufficient to be able to make a decision as to whether the complaint should be referred for investigation. In particular, it was noted that no details of exactly what had been submitted to the Council were provided, when this had taken place and what (if any) the response had been from the Councillors. The Board undertook to consider the complaint afresh should the information requested be provided. No further notification has been received by the Monitoring Officer.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to note that the Standards Board for England has agreed not to take any further action in relation to allegations made against two District Councillors and one Member of Ramsey Town Council but awaits further information which will determine whether further action would be required against two other Councillors also from Ramsey Town Council.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Letters received from the Standards Board for England dated 24th July and 14th August 2006.

**Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager -  
Tel: (01480) 388007.**