
Standards Committee

Report of the meetings held on 6th December 2007 and 31st January 2008

Matters for Information

11. USE OF RESOURCES JUDGEMENTS 2006/2007

To comply with a requirement highlighted by the Audit Commission in their Use of Resources Judgement 2005/06 for “an assessment of the standards of ethical conduct across the organisation”, the Committee has noted the outcome of an annual survey of Code of Conduct complaints by type, locality and outcome and the training activity which has been undertaken or which is planned for the future. Having regard to the seven cases which had been reported in 2007, the Committee has concluded that there were no commonalities in the cases considered by the Board which required to be addressed specifically by training locally. However, the Committee has requested the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer to initiate a process to record Code of Conduct enquiries received from Town and Parish Clerks and Councillors to inform the Committee of the areas of the Code which give rise to the most enquiries.

12. CODE OF CONDUCT

Standards Board Notifications

In accordance with the procedure adopted by the Standards Board for England, the Committee has been informed that the Board has decided not to take any further action in relation to allegations made against Councillors serving on Catworth and Earith Parish Councils.

Factsheets

The Committee has noted the content of two factsheets produced by the Standards Board for England on sections of the Code of Conduct relating to bullying, lobby groups and declarations of interest.

13. TRAINING – UPDATE

A summary of the response received from District Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors to the training sessions held on the Code of Conduct since the introduction of the new Model Code last May has been presented to the Committee. Although satisfied with the response received to the training activity undertaken by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer, the Committee

has requested that a session on the Code be offered to parishes in the north of the District in the New Year and this has now been arranged for 28th February 2008.

14. CONSULTATION ON ORDERS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS IN ENGLAND

The Department of Communities and Local Government has published a consultation paper entitled "Orders and Regulations relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England". The consultation focuses primarily on local authority Standards Committees becoming responsible for assessing allegations of misconduct against Councillors and makes suggestions as to how the regime could operate via appropriate regulations and orders under the Local Government Act 2000, as amended.

The Committee has formulated a response to the consultation paper on behalf of the District Council and, in particular, has urged the Secretary of State to consider deferring implementation of the revised conduct regime until 1st September 2008 to enable local authorities sufficient time to make the arrangements necessary to implement the changes. A copy of the Committee's full response is available from the Democratic Services Section.

D L Hall
Chairman