

**CODE OF CONDUCT: STANDARDS BOARD NOTIFICATION
(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 decision in respect of an allegation made against a Councillor serving on St Neots Town Council.

2. DETAILS OF CASE

- 2.1 It had been alleged that the Town Councillor made comments in a letter to a local newspaper which were inaccurate and which falsely accused the complainant and another of "lashing out" at a member of the public. The complainant has stated that the allegations and accusations within the letter were not supported by evidence and in asking the matter to be investigated by the Standards Board has suggested that the Town Councillor has used the unfounded allegations to further his own political career ahead of May's local elections.

- 2.2 Whilst the acknowledging that the complainant considered the letter in the local newspaper went beyond the acceptable limits of "cut and thrust" in local politics, in the context of political life, the Standards Board considers it inevitable that Members will subject each other to criticism. Members have a variety of platforms from which to respond publicly to such criticism and to put over their own view points or rebuttals. The Board does not consider that the alleged comments reached a threshold whereby they would be considered to amount to a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

- 2.3 The Board has decided that the allegation should not be referred to an Ethical Standards Officer for investigation. Having taken account of the available information, the Board do not believe that a potential breach of the Code of Conduct was disclosed and there was no finding of fact.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Committee is invited to note that the Standards Board for England has agreed not to take any further action in relation to an allegation made against a Councillor serving on St Neots Town Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Letter received from the Standards Board for England dated 21st February 2008.

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