

Committee: STANDARDS

Agenda Item

Date: 18 July 2011

6

Title: ANNUAL REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Author: Michael Perry, Assistant Chief Executive - Legal 01799 510416 Item for decision

Summary

1. It is considered good practice that the Standards Committee should make a report on an annual basis to Full Council. This report is to seek members' approval to this year's annual report intended to be presented to Full Council.

Recommendations

2. That members approve the draft report for presentation to Full Council by the chairman of the Standards Committee.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
Register of complaints.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	None.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Finance	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

4. The draft annual report details the changes to the Standards framework and the work undertaken by the committee during the year.

Risk Analysis

5. There are no risks attached to this report.

Annual Report to the Council

Uttlesford District Council's Standards Committee 2010/11

Composition

The Standards Committee comprises 10 members, 4 elected members of the council, 3 independent persons and 3 representatives of town and parish councils. The committee is chaired by Mr Sean Brady one of the independent persons. The Committee is supported by the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Monitoring Officer, Mr Michael Perry. During the course of the year there has been no change in the representation of the towns and parishes.

Meetings during the year

There were 5 scheduled meetings of the Standards Committee during the council year although one was cancelled for lack of business. The committee completed a work programme which included considering proposed changes to the Standards regime; giving guidance to members on handling confidential information; advising members with regard to amendments to the Licensing Act 2003; examining the proposed changes to the council's governance arrangements; considering the arrangements for the appointment of town and parish representatives; dealing with confidential information and social networking. In addition the committee received regular updates on decisions on of the First Tier Tribunal Local Government Standards in England.

Sub committees met on a number of occasions to consider allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct. 7 such allegations related to parish councillors, the other 13 related to district councillors. 3 allegations against district councillors were passed for investigation. In 2 of these there was a finding of no breach of the Code of Conduct. The other is currently still under investigation. In respect of the complaints against parish councillors 3 of these were current at the start of the Council year. In 2 cases there was a finding of no breach of the Code of Conduct. In the third case there was a finding of a breach which was considered to be of a technical nature and no sanction was imposed. Of the remaining 4 complaints 2 were passed for investigation which both led to findings that the Code of Conduct had not been breached. All but 3 of the decisions not to refer a complaint for investigation triggered a request for a review but in each case the original decision was upheld.

Future Actions

- The Constitution Working Group has indicated that it intends to recommend to the Council that post the Localism Bill becoming law it should adopt a voluntary Code of Conduct and has asked the Committee to consider what such a code should contain
- The CWG has also asked the Committee to recommend streamlined procedures for vetting and dealing with complaints and procedures for notifying members when complaints have been made
- The Committee will reconsider its published procedures and policies in the light of the above.