



AGENDA ITEM: 7

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
12 JUNE 2008**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

Contact for further information: Mrs G L Rowe (Ext 5004)

**SUBJECT: PUBLICATION OF ADDRESS TO WHICH WRITTEN ALLEGATIONS OF
BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT SHOULD BE SENT**

District wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To agree the manner in which the Committee shall publish details of the address to which written allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct under section 57A(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 should be sent.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the action taken by the Council Secretary and Solicitor as set out in 4.0 below be noted and endorsed.

2.2 That the Council Secretary and Solicitor be given authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that the details published under Regulation 10(1) continue to be brought to the attention of the public and that any changes to those details are promptly published.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Regulation 10 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 states:

“Every Standards Committee shall publish in such manner as it considers appropriate, details of the address or addresses to which written allegations under section 57A(1) of the Act should be sent.”

3.2 The Standards Board Guidance states as follows:

“Publicising the Complaints System”

Each authority is required to publish a notice detailing where Code of Conduct complaints should be sent to. This is to ensure that members of the public are aware of the change of responsibility for handling Code complaints and what the process entails. If an authority is responsible for parish and town councils, the notice should make this clear.

The complaints system may be publicised through:

- an authority’s website
- advertising in one or more local newspapers
- an authority’s own newspaper or circular
- notices in public areas such as local libraries or authority reception areas

It is important that the public notice reaches as many people as possible so that members of the public know how to complain if necessary.”

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 I prepare the notice attached as Appendix 1 and displayed it on the Council’s noticeboard and circulated it to all Councillors, Standards Committee Members, all staff and Parish Clerks.

4.2 The Council’s website was also updated to reflect the changes and copies are attached as Appendix 2.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Regulation 10(2) states:

“Every Standards Committee shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the details published under paragraph (1) continue to be brought to the attention of the public and that any changes to those details are promptly published.”

5.2 The Standards Board Guidance continues:

“The standards committee must also continue to publicise regularly the address that misconduct complaints should be sent to. In addition, the standards committee needs to alert the public to any changes in such arrangements.

Authorities need to think carefully about how publicity for their complaints system is worded. This is to ensure that members of the public are clear about how to complain, who to complain to, and if there may be an alternative to a formal complaint to the standards committee.”

- 5.3 I would propose that authority be given to me to do this on the Committee’s behalf.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 There are no sustainability or community strategy implications.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As I have not published an advert in the newspaper, as agreed at an earlier Standards Committee meeting, there are no costs associated with publishing this information other than the officer time involved.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 There are no risks to the Council’s business arising from this Report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Public Notice

Appendix 2 – Extracts from the Council’s website