



AGENDA ITEM: 6

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Report of: Managing Director (People and Places) and Borough Solicitor

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SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT STANDARDS

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the observations reported in the Committee on Standards in Public Life 'Annual Plan 2014-2015' relating to Local Government Standards.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the observations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life on Local Government Standards, as referenced at paragraph 4, be noted.
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3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current local government standards regime came into effect on 1 July 2012 when the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011 came into force.
- 3.2 The role and function of the Standards Committee, at a local level, are set down at Article 9 of the Constitution.
- 3.3 The Independent Person (IP) fulfils a statutory role appointed under Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011. The IP's role and function is set down at Article 9 and within the Independent Person Protocol (Constitution 16.5).

4.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STANDARDS

- 4.1 The Committee for Standards in Public Life, in its Annual Plan for 2014-15, referenced Local Government Standards and "as a result of changes to the local standards regime by the Localism Act 2011, local government standards were identified as an area of risk in their 14th report, *Standards matter: 'A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life'* published in January

2013. At that time they reiterated their concerns about the lack of sanctions and insufficient independent involvement in the consideration of complaints and the need for strong local ethical leadership. The Committee recognised, however, the need to allow the “new” arrangements to bed down before properly assessing the effectiveness of the new system and whether it was delivering its stated objectives.”

- 4.1 The Report continues “The recent survey, carried out by the Local Government Lawyer, on the implementation of the Localism Act 2011, suggests initial early indications are that the role of the independent person has been generally well received and there is some evidence that the number of vexatious complaints is falling. However, the effectiveness of the sanctions regime remains an issue of concern to the Committee. We are aware that there have been individual cases that illustrate this and we are alert to the need for continuing scrutiny in this area.”

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 The information contained in the report is for information only and there are no significant sustainability impacts associated with it. Promoting and maintaining high ethical Standards contributes to achievement of the Community Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There are no risks to the Council’s business objectives.

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

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Committee on Standards in Public Life – Annual Plan 2014 – pages 1-12.