

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 9th OCTOBER 2008

**CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE STANDARDS
COMMITTEE – QUARTERLY UPDATE 8th MAY – 30th JUNE 2008**

**REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES AND MONITORING
OFFICER**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with details of the Code of Conduct complaints received by the Standards Committee during the period 8th May 2008 – 30th June 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the contents of this report are noted.

3. SUMMARY

From 8th May 2008 to 30th June 2008 the Standards Committee received no Code of Conduct complaints under the new system for local assessment. A quarterly return has been forwarded to the Standards Board for England.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

5. INFORMATION

- 5.1 The new system for the local assessment of complaints alleging breaches of the Members Code of Conduct came into effect on 8th May 2008. Under Section 186 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (amending the Local Government Act 2000) there is a requirement that the Council provide regular returns to the Standards Board for England. The returns provide information about Code of Conduct complaints received by the Standards Committee and the outcome from each of the complaints which have been dealt with.

The first return covered the period 8th May 2008 to 30th June 2008. During that period the Standards Committee did not receive any Code of Conduct complaints. A return was sent electronically to the Standards Board for England confirming this information.

A press release was issued by the Standards Board for England on 31 July stating that a total of 360 complaints had been made to Standards Committees across England from the period 8th May to 30 June 2008. The 360 complaints were received by 164 English Local Authorities. A further 279 Authorities confirmed they had no cases to report in the first few weeks.

5.2 Equal Opportunities

There are no issues to be addressed.

5.3 Environment Impact

No implications

5.4 Legal Comments

The legal comment is contained within the main body of this report

5.5 Links to Corporate Priorities

Providing regular updates on the complaints made to the Standards Committee demonstrates compliance with the CPA requirement that “the Council has undertaken an assessment of standards of conduct, including how effectively members are complying with the code of conduct, the number and types of complaints received, and takes action as appropriate”.

5.6 Opportunities and Risks

The opportunities and risks associated with this decision have been identified and assessed. Arrangements have been put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.

5.7 Financial Implications

There will be additional costs associated with new local system for processing members Code of Conduct complaints, however the cost will depend upon the nature of the complaint received and whether an independent investigator is required. No complaints in the first period is a positive start and monitoring will continue throughout the year. Any additional costs will be flagged up as appropriate in financial monitoring reports.

6. Ward Implications

District wide implications.

7. Background Papers

Press Release from the Standards Board for England dated 31 July 2008 entitled “Local Authorities Tackling Complaints About Members”.

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