

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 21st SEPTEMBER 2011

**REPORT ON ACTION UNDERTAKEN BY THE MONITORING OFFICER
FOLLOWING A CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT - COUNCILLOR
ADRIAN MEREDITH**

REPORT OF HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE

To update the Standards Committee as to action undertaken at the direction of the Standards Committee Referrals Sub-Committee following a complaint alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Standards Committee confirm that they are satisfied with the outcome of the action undertaken by the Monitoring Officer following the decision of the Referrals Sub-Committee on 16TH June 2011

3. SUMMARY

Following a complaint to the Standards Committee, the Referrals Sub-Committee directed that the Monitoring Officer provide training to Councillor Adrian Meredith. The Committee are required to consider whether they are satisfied with the action undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the direction given.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Standards Committee Referrals Sub-Committee – 16th June 2011

5. INFORMATION

5.1 Background

On the 16th June 2011 the Referrals Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee met to consider a complaint made by a member of the public alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct by Councillor Adrian Meredith. Having considered the complaint and taken advice the Sub-Committee decided that they would direct the Monitoring Officer to provide training to Councillor Meredith. A copy of the public summary is attached at Appendix 1. It should be noted that the Referrals Sub-Committee made no finding regarding whether or not the Code of Conduct had been

breached and that Councillor Meredith had already confirmed his willingness to receive training.

Following this direction the Monitoring Officer wrote to Councillor Meredith attended the Civic Offices on 18th July 2011 to meet with the Monitoring Officer and one of the Deputy Monitoring Officers to discuss sections of the Code of Conduct relating to using your position as a member improperly to confer or secure an advantage or disadvantage and other Code of Conduct issues that particularly related to the local planning process. Following that meeting the Monitoring Officer confirms that he is satisfied that the areas of the code that the Sub-Committee asked to be covered in the training have been addressed and that the appropriate training/discussions have taken place.

It is a requirement that when any other action is directed by the Standards Committee (or Sub-Committee to the Standards Committee) that the outcome is reported back to the Standards Committee within three months of the decision being made or as soon as possible thereafter. This report is put for the Committee to consider at the first available meeting following the meeting with Councillor Meredith.

It is also a requirement that the Standards Committee have to confirm whether or not they are satisfied with the outcome achieved. Accordingly, the Committee are required to consider the action undertaken following the decision made by the Referrals Sub-Committee on 16th June and decide whether the matter can be considered closed.

5.2 Equality and Diversity

The Monitoring Officer will ensure that any equality and diversity issues are addressed in respect of Code of Conduct training.

5.3 Environmental Impact

No implications

5.4 Legal Comment

The Referrals Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee referred the allegation against Councillor Meredith to the Monitoring Officer with the direction that the Councillor undertake training. This was in accordance with their authority under Section 57 A (2) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by Section 185 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 Act Regulation 13 (3) (a)).

In accordance with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 Act Regulation 13 (4) (c) the Standards Committee are required to make a decision as to whether or not they are satisfied with the action which is being undertaken as a result of the referral to the Monitoring

Officer. If no further action is required notification is to be given to the Member who is subject to the report and the person who made the allegations (in accordance with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 Act Regulation 13 (7)).

5.5 Links with Corporate Priorities

Processing complaints in accordance with statutory guidelines together with ensuring that appropriate action is taken in order to resolve issues raised by the complaints, assist the Council in meeting the corporate priority of being an efficient and effective Council.

5.6 Opportunities and Risks

The opportunities and risks associated with providing this Code of Conduct training in complying with the direction from the Referrals Sub-Committee has 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

The cost of the training provided was funded from within existing budgets.

6. WARD IMPLICATIONS

District wide implications

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2008

The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008

***Report prepared by Matthew Cumberbatch, Legal Services Manager
Tel: 01952 383255***