

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Corporate Director of Support Services

to

Standards Committee

on

13th September 2010

Report prepared by: John Williams,
Head of Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer

Agenda
Item No.

6

Monitoring Officer's Report

A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

To provide the Standards Committee with an update on ethical issues.

2. Recommendation

That the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1 New Independent Member

As a result of the resignation of Canon Stephen Burdett in May 2010 a public advertisement was placed for a new independent member on the Standards Committee

Following an interview process conducted by the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer, a recommendation is to be made to Council at its meeting on 4th November 2010 to appoint the Reverend Rick Williams to the vacancy.

3.2 The Constitution

This was completely re-printed in July 2010 and a copy has been sent to all Members. It includes terms of reference for the Standards Dispensation Sub-Committee (minute 1036 of Standards Committee 31st March 2010 refers).

3.3 New Members: Registration of Interests & Induction

A public register is kept by the Monitoring Officer of interests registered by Members, including gifts / hospitality worth more than £25, pursuant to paragraph 13 of the Members' Code of Conduct and S.81(1) of the Local Government Act 2000.

All new Members elected in May 2010 have completed their Registration of Interests forms. In addition all existing Members have been reminded that they should review their registration forms and most have done so.

All new Members had an induction session with the Monitoring Officer covering probity and governance matters, the Code of Conduct and an overview of the Constitution including the decision making processes.

3.4 Issues arising from recent Complaints against Members

Recent cases which have come before the Assessment and Hearing Sub-Committees have highlighted the need for all Members of the Council (and Leigh-on-Sea Town Council) to receive further training on the Code of Conduct. In particular should cover the implications of having a prejudicial interest and that it is prudent for Members to respond to all correspondence from members of the public even if this is simply an acknowledgement.

It is proposed to organise a training session for Borough Councillors and to invite Members of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council; this idea is supported by the new Town Clerk of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council. The session will cover the matters referred to above and also those referred to in minute 1037(b) of the Standards Committee held on 31st March 2010.

3.5 Training Issues for Members of the Standards Committee

To agree a date for a training session for Members of the Standards Committee.

4. Background Papers

None

8. Appendices

None