



AGENDA ITEM: 8

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9 SEPTEMBER 2008

PUBLICITY FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

**RICHARD G LONG,
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present details of proposals for publicising the new arrangements for receiving complaints against councillors and co-opted members.

BACKGROUND

2. Under the Standards Board for England (SBE) “Local Assessment of Complaints” Guidance, each authority is required to publish a notice detailing arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against councillors and advising how to register complaints. The arrangements are to ensure that members of the public are aware of the changes in responsibility for handling complaints relating to breaches of the Code of Conduct and what the process entails.
3. Guidance advises publicising the new system via an authority’s website; advertising in one or more local newspapers; using an authority’s own newspaper or circular; and posting notices in public areas such as libraries or authority reception areas.
4. The SBE also advises that there should be regular publicity about the address to which complaints should be sent and that any changes to the system should also be publicised.
5. It is proposed that the required notice be published in the Public Notices pages of the Evening Gazette and for a news article to be placed in the next edition of Middlesbrough News which is circulated to all households in the town.
6. The Council’s website will be updated to reflect the Standards Committee’s new role in carrying out its functions under the Standards Committee (England)

Regulations 2008. This will include the consideration, investigation, determination and referral of complaints against councillors and co-opted members of Middlesbrough Council and the Nunthorpe and Stainton and Thornton Parish Councils.

7. The complaints will be administered as part of the Council's Corporate Complaints system. A new complaints form has been prepared in paper format it will also be available as an on-line form.
8. Notices will be posted in the Town Hall and Civic Office reception areas and in local libraries informing the public that responsibility for considering complaints against councillors and co-opted members has transferred from the Standards Board England to local Standards Committees.

RECOMMENDATION:

9. That the Committee notes the report and agrees the proposed arrangements.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008
Local Assessment of Complaints Guidance –
Standards Board for England 2008

AUTHOR

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