

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>15 JULY 2011</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2011</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** This is an open report.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Robert Rogers (Independent Member) (Chairman); Olwyn Barnett (Local Authority representative), Jake Bharier (Independent Member); Chris Chappell (Local Authority representative), Isabel Fox (Independent Member); Richard Gething (Town and Parish Council Representative); Mary Morris (Town and Parish Council Representative); David Stevens (Independent Member) (Vice-Chairman).

## **Wards Affected**

County-wide

## **Purpose**

To inform Council about the activities of the Committee and its Sub-Committees and the future of the standards framework.

## **Recommendation**

**THAT the report be noted**

## **Dispensations**

1. We have granted a dispensation to Kington Town Council in relation to the Kington Recreation Ground Trust.

## **The Herefordshire Association of Local Councils**

2. We received a report from Mr Richard Gething about the work being undertaken by the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC). We value our close working relationship with HALC, which has continued to provide benefits in terms of joint training and guidance on standards and ethics. The Monitoring Officer is also closely involved with training and Mr John Jones, Electoral Services Manager, will be contributing to HALC's forthcoming training sessions on Chairmanship, on his behalf.

## **The Future of the Local Government Standards Framework**

3. The Decentralisation and Localism Bill is currently being examined under the Committee stage at the House of Lords, and is due to receive royal assent late in 2011. The Bill includes proposals to abolish the Standards Board regime, and we discussed the implications of this at length, assisted by a paper produced by Mr Jake Bharier, one of our independent members. We are consulting on the future of the Committee and the possibility of adopting a voluntary Code of Conduct for members, and will report to Council in the autumn.

## **Local Filter Cases and Determinations**

4. We have reviewed progress made with complaints about local authority, town and parish councillors since the introduction of the local filter on 08 May 2008. In 2008, 18 complaints were considered, 50 in 2009, 27 in 2010, and to date in 2011, 23. We have expressed our gratitude to the Legal and Democratic Services team for the good progress that has been made in dealing with complaints quickly, and the work they have carried out on mediation, conciliation between complainants, governance reviews and training and support for councils.

## **Background Papers**

- Agenda for the Standards Committee Meeting held on 24 June 2011.

**ROBERT ROGERS  
CHAIRMAN  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**