

Standards Committee

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Report Title	Draft Standards Committee Newsletter
Date of Meeting:	15 th June 2009
Directorate:	Borough Solicitor
Ward(s)	All

1. Summary

The report invites Standards Committee to comment on a draft Newsletter and to instruct the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to publish a newsletter on behalf of the Committee taking into account the comments of the committee.

2. Recommendations

1. That Standards Committee comment on the attached draft newsletter.
2. That the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer publish a newsletter on behalf of the Committee taking into account committees comments.

3. Report Background

A Standards Committee Newsletter is published twice a year.

Historically the newsletter has been prepared by the Borough Solicitor and presented to Committee for information. The Borough Solicitor is seeking committees input to the next newsletter to improve the link between the committee and the newsletter published on their behalf.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

There are no financial risk associated with this report as publication costs are allowed for in the Standards Committee budget for the year 2009/10.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

4.3 Other Implications

There are no other implications associated with this report.

5. Background Papers

Previous reports to Standards Committee and Newsletters.

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WHISTLE BLOWING

The ability to ‘blow the whistle’ on a member of staff, a councillor or contractor working at the council without fear of reprisal is an important weapon in the armoury of ethical governance.

To remind everyone of their responsibility to report concerns and of their right to protection the Monitoring Officer, who is the Single Point Of Contact for whistle blowing, has published a new poster across council offices.

GIFTS & HOSPITALITY

HAVE YOU REGISTERED

If you have received gifts or hospitality in connection with your official duties worth £25 or more you must register them.

To register a gift or hospitality contact Frazer McGown, Democratic Services Manager
(tel: 01604 837101)

If you are unsure about the need to register an item ask Frazer.

RIPA

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 or RIPA is the law that controls the Council’s use of covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources to obtain evidence for prosecutions.

NBC has not used RIPA in the last two years however in response to concerns surrounding high profile cases earlier in the year, in which some authorities were accused of using RIPA unethically and without proper safeguards the Communities and Local Government department is undertaking a consultation exercise on suggested changes to the law and guidance.

Amongst the proposals are:

- Withdrawal of some RIPA powers from Council
- Reduction in paperwork for the Police
- Restricting authorisation for use of RIPA to only the most senior officer or officers in an authority

The Council is seeking the input of Standards

STANDARDS COMMITTEE AWAY DAY

The Chair of Standards and the Monitoring Officer have agreed the format for the Committee’s away day. The event will be an opportunity for the Committee to plan an ambitious programme for the year.

Speakers on the day will include the Chief Executive David Kennedy and the Leader of the Council Councillor Woods.

