

Report of	Meeting	Date
Monitoring Officer	Governance Committee	17 January 2013

## 6 MONTH REVIEW OF THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update members in relation to complaints received under the new Code of Conduct regime.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That members note the report and that the review be referred to full Council for consideration.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- When the new code of conduct and investigation of complaints procedure was adopted it was agreed to review the number of complaints received and use of the new system after 6 months.
- To date there has been one complaint received against two Chorley Councillors. This was resolved to the complainant's satisfaction by the Monitoring Officer.
- There has been one complaint received as standards complaint concerning a Parish Council. This complaint was not accepted as it related to the conduct of the Parish Clerk and did not therefore fall within the scope of the Code of Conduct.
- There has been no adverse comment concerning the procedure adopted nor the complexity of the new code of conduct.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

### BACKGROUND

- In July Chorley Council adopted a Code of Conduct which complied with the requirements of the Localism Act.
- Concern was raised concerning the complexity of the new code and the complaints procedure. It is acknowledged that the intention of the Localism Act was to have a light touch standards regime. In light of the concerns that the adopted code was too prescriptive

and may lead to an increase in the number of complaints, members requested that the adoption of the code and investigation procedure be reviewed after 6 months to address this.

10. Since the adoption of the new Code and Investigation procedure there have been two complaints received. The first complaint was against two Chorley Councillors. This was resolved to the complainant's satisfaction without the need to refer to members. The complaint was in 2 parts. Initially the complainant felt that a newspaper article was misleading. The Monitoring Officer considered this and could not come to the same conclusion and in any event the complaint in itself did not breach the code of conduct and so was not pursued. The second was that correspondence had gone unanswered leading the member of the public to believe the members were not acting openly and honestly. There was a short lead in time between the initial correspondence (11 September) and complaint (1 October), less than 3 weeks. The Monitoring Officer urged the members to respond and this resolved the issue.
11. The second complaint was against a clerk to a parish council. As this complaint does not fall within the scope of the standards regime, the complainant was advised of this and the complaint was not pursued.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	X	Policy and Communications	

### COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

13. There are no financial implications in this report.

### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

14. None save those contained in the report.

Chris Moister  
Monitoring Officer

There are no background papers to this report.