

To: **Members of the Standards Committee**

## ***Notice of a Meeting of the Standards Committee***

**Monday, 5 March 2012 at 2.00 pm**

**County Hall, New Road, Oxford**



Peter G. Clark  
County Solicitor

February 2012

**Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead**  
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### **Membership**

Chairman – Ms A. Griffiths  
Deputy Chairman - Dr N. Alphey

**Councillors:** Mike Badcock Mrs C. Fulljames Val Smith  
Norman Bolster David Robertson  
Ann Bonner Roz Smith

**Voting Independent Members:** Professor M. Dean Mr M. Greenwood

#### **Notes:**

- **Date of next meeting: 24 May 2012**

## Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

### **The duty to declare ...**

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, i.e. where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

### **Whose interests are included ...**

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

### **When and what to declare ...**

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

### **Taking part if you have an interest ...**

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

### **"Prejudicial" interests ...**

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

### **What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...**

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

### **Exceptions ...**

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

### **Seeking Advice ...**

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note**
3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2011 (**ST3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**
5. **Local Authority Standards (Pages 5 - 8)**

Report by County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (**ST5**).

At its meeting in December 2011, the Standards Committee gave initial consideration to the standards implications of the Localism Act. At that time, the Committee was minded to recommend Council to retain a standards committee under the new regime. However, following an informal meeting of the Committee on 16 January 2012 to further consider the implications of the Act in more detail, this matter has been brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

***The Committee is RECOMMENDED to recommend Council that:***

- (a) ***a Standards Committee is not appointed under the Localism Act 2011;***
- (b) ***the Audit Committee be renamed as the Audit and Governance Committee and its terms of reference expanded to include oversight of member standards;***
- (c) ***a member-officer working group be appointed to enable consideration of standards complaints against members of the Council reporting to the Audit & Governance Committee; and***
- (d) ***The Monitoring Officer be delegated to agree appropriate procedures for the handling of complaints.***