

**Meeting: STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Date: 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007**

**REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT – CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS**

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**1 PURPOSE**

To update members on the introduction of the revised Code of Conduct and consider some consequential changes to members guidance.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the proposals for adopting the new Code of Conduct and training for Members
- 2.2 To decide upon a replacement Pocket Guide to the Code issued to members and guidance on the receipt of gifts and hospitality.

**3 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS**

- 3.1 At its last meeting the Standards Committee considered in detail the draft of the new Code of Conduct issued by the Government.
- 3.2 The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 was made on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007. Every local authority must adopt the revised Code of Conduct (with or without local additions) by resolution of the full council within six months of the Order being made i.e. on or before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007.
- 3.3 The current intention is that the new Code of Conduct, without local additions, will be presented to the Council meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> July for adoption with immediately effect. Three training seminars will be conducted by the Borough Solicitor on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 4<sup>th</sup> July and 11<sup>th</sup> July and hopefully all members will be able to attend one of these.
- 3.4 In 2004 following much deliberation the Standards Committee issued pocket/filofax sized guidance to members in part summarizing the existing Code of Conduct. Following the adoption of the new Code, this guidance will be incorrect and must be withdrawn or amended.
- 3.5 It is understood that later this month the Standards Board for England will issue pre-printed pocket guides for all members summarizing the Code and a copy is attached at Appendix 2. This is a clear summary of the Code and it does not immediately appear that any significant improvement could be made by the Council devising and printing its own new guidance.

- 3.6 The Standards Board pocket guide does not, however, cover advice on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality which is contained in the existing Stevenage document. For the past ten years, in common with a number of other authorities, Stevenage has issued guidance to its members on this sensitive subject and the Committee may wish to reissue that guidance separately if it decides to rely on the Standards Board for England pocket guide.
- 3.7 A proposed guidance note on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality is attached which is similar to the guidance which has been issued in the past. If the Committee decided to issue this additional guidance it could be also placed on the Council's intranet.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **APPENDICES – Available on request**

- 1 Stevenage Borough Council's existing guidance on the Code of Conduct
- 2 Standards Board for England pocket guide
- 3 Draft guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality