

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee    **DATE:** 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009

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**WARDS:** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (FURTHER PROVISIONS) ENGLAND REGULATIONS 2009**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to Members' attention the contents of the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009 ("the Regulations") which came into force on 15<sup>th</sup> June this year.

##### **2. Recommendation(s)/ Proposed Action**

- 2.1 The Standards Committee is requested to note the contents of this report and the Regulations.

##### **3. Council Priorities – Economy and Skills**

###### **Effective systems and processes**

- 3.1 The Local Code of Conduct for Members (which comprises the Model Code published by the Government in 2007 together with some supplementary provisions) forms the bedrock of the conduct regime and aims to promote the public's trust and confidence in Members and faith in local democracy.
- 3.2 The Regulations set out new provisions relating to the initial assessment of complaints, new rules about dispensations in certain circumstances where Members have a personal and prejudicial interest and gives local authorities the option to set up Joint Standards Committees to discharge all or some of the standards' functions in Part III of the Local Government Act 2000.

##### **4. Other Implications**

- 4.1 Whilst this report does not have any financial or staffing implications the Regulations do give this Council the opportunity of handling complaints through a different mechanism if it is considered appropriate to do so.

4.2 It is not felt that the content of the Regulations will have a significant impact on the way the Council deals with its standards' functions.

## **5. Background/Supporting Information**

5.1 The Regulations which are summarised in **Appendix A** cover the following areas:-

- a). Initial assessment of complaints,
- b). Joint Standards Committees, and
- c). Dispensations

5.2 The Regulations relating to the initial assessment of complaints enable the Standards Board for England to suspend the initial assessment functions of local Standards Committees and direct them to refer allegations to the Standards Board for England or to the Standards Committee of another local authority in prescribed circumstances. It is not considered that this is likely to occur in Slough as the Authority has had no adverse comments from the Board since the standards' regime came into force in 2000.

5.3 The subject of all six local authorities in Berkshire setting up a Joint-Standards Committee has been discussed by the Berkshire Solicitors' Group (which includes Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer representatives from each of the six Authorities) and there is no real enthusiasm to set up any Joint Standards Committees.

5.4 The Regulations relating to dispensations is an opportunity to clarify those which previously existed and which were open to interpretation.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The Regulations are to be welcomed but they are not considered to have any real impact on this Council at the present time.

## **7. Background Papers**

The Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009

## **8. Appendix**

**Appendix A** Summary of the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009