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23 March 2011

To: Chairman – Kathy English
Vice-Chairman – Alan Hampton

Members of the Standards Committee:

Diane Best	Independent Member
Alan Brett	Parish Member
Bob Bryant	Parish Member
Nigel Cathcart	District Council Member, non-group
Michael Farrar	Parish Member
Roger Hall	District Council Member, Conservative Group
John House	Independent Member
Janet Lockwood	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
Cicely Murfitt	District Council Member, non-group
Tony Orgee	District Council Member, Conservative Group
Raith Overhill	Independent Member
Mary Pilfold-Allan	Independent Member
Eric Revell	Independent Member
Alex Riley	District Council Member, Independent Group
Jim Stewart	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
Chris Tomsett	Parish Member
James Williams	Independent Member

and to I Dewar (County Executive Officer, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC)), for information.

Dear Sir or Madam

This is a supplement to the previously-published agenda for the meeting of **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** on **WEDNESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2011**, containing the response from Communities and Local Government to the representations made by the Standards Committee.

Yours faithfully
JEAN HUNTER
Chief Executive

Requests for a large print agenda must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting.

AGENDA

6. Future of Standards

Chapters 4 and 5 of the Localism Bill, relating to predetermination (Chapter 4) and standards (Chapter 5) are available on the Council's website, www.scambs.gov.uk/meetings as part of the agenda for the Standards Committee meeting. Hard copies will be provided by Democratic Services if requested no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

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Mrs Kathleen English
 Chairman and independent Member
 South Cambridgeshire District Council Standards
 Committee
 South Cambridgeshire Hall
 Cambourne Business Park
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Andrew Stunell MP
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Our Ref: ER/ST/008460/11

Your Ref: SC101143

8th March 2011

Dear Mrs English,

LOCALISM BILL: THE FUTURE OF STANDARDS

Thank you for your letter of 24 January to the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP expressing the views on your Standards Committee on our proposals in the Localism Bill for abolishing the Standards Board regime. I am replying because my Ministerial responsibilities include local government.

The Government believes that the existing conduct regime has encouraged vexatious, politically motivated and malicious complaints that waste council resources and council taxpayers' money. Although the Localism Bill currently includes a provision to abolish the requirement on authorities to adopt a code of conduct for their members, it will not prevent them from doing so if they wish.

The Government expects that councils will decide to adopt a code of conduct in the absence of a legal requirement to do so, and such a code could cover bullying and failure to treat others, including council employees, with respect, or any other types of behaviour that it considers inappropriate or improper. Councils will need to consider the sanctions that they will have the power to impose given that these will no longer include suspension or disqualification of members. It should be noted that under the Localism Bill, district councils will no longer be responsible for dealing with complaints about the conduct of parish council members in their area.

The Government is committed to high standards of conduct and that is why we have introduced a new criminal offence, for members who deliberately fail to register or declare their personal interests. A member who simply forgets to register an interest will not be guilty of committing the new offence. The definition of the interests that members will be required to register and disclose will be set out in secondary legislation.

Finally, I am not aware of misreporting in the national press of advice from your Council's legal team. I can assure you that our press releases were based on our internal advice.

Yours sincerely
 Andrew Stunell

ANDREW STUNELL MP

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