

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

17 June 2009

AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Democratic Services Officer

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND REVIEW OF STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Purpose

1. To receive and note the responses made.
2. This is not a key decision because it is a consultation response; no decision is required.

Background

3. In order to identify areas for review, the Standards Board for England (SBE) has consulted the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) on issues that have arisen from the ethical standards legislation over the last year. The District Council was informed of this on 3 June 2009, as a member of ACSeS, although the deadline for responses was just one week later.
4. Officers were aware that there were issues which South Cambridgeshire district and parish councillors, clerks and Standards Committee members would wish to raise with the SBE, so applied for, and received, a one week extension to be able to consult widely and bring the responses to the Standards Committee's 17 June 2009 meeting before forwarding them directly to the SBE.
5. The Standards Committee is not being asked to approve, modify or endorse any or all of the responses. Consultees were advised that the responses would be collated, received by the Standards Committee, and forwarded to the SBE on 17 June. Responses made to the Standards Committee Chairman during 2008-09 during visits to, and discussions with, parish councils in South Cambridgeshire and the political groups as SCDC will also be included, although this does not preclude members from these authorities from responding to the consultation.
6. There was not any further information available about whether the SBE will publish a summary of the responses received or whether a review of the Standards framework is forthcoming.

Options

7. To supplement the responses with a statement made on behalf of the Standards Committee as a whole.

Implications

8.

Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None

Equal Opportunities	In light of the limited time available to respond to the consultation, only those parish and community councils and meetings who could be contacted by e-mail were consulted directly (93 of 101 authorities), although all district councillors were consulted and it was hoped that they could raise the issue with their parishes. It appears that this has been done, as responses have been received from authorities which have not provided the District Council with an e-mail address.
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Consultations

9. South Cambridgeshire District Councillors, Parish Councillors, Parish Clerks and members of the Standards Committee. Officers have tried to collate comments into broad categories to focus attention on issues raised by a number of respondents.

Effect on Strategic Aims

10.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
	The Standards Committee can use this opportunity to consider the responses received and identify any areas where it can assist with issues raised.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
	None specific.
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
	Evidence from the Standards and Ethics category at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2009 demonstrates that having a strong, visible standards committee can boost residents' satisfaction with their local authority and increase turnout at local elections.
Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.	
None specific.	
Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.	
The Standards Committee is acting as a representative of the residents of South Cambridgeshire and ensuring that all South Cambridgeshire local authorities have a chance to make their views known.	

Recommendations

11. To note the responses received (**Appendix A**).

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Standards Board for England press release 26 March 2009

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