

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 1ST NOVEMBER 2007

### DVD – STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – THE CODE OF CONDUCT - THE CODE UNCOVERED

Report of the: Monitoring Officer

Status: For Consideration and Recommendation

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**This report supports the Key Aim of** effective management of Council resources.

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Loney

**Head of Service** Head of Legal and Committee Services – Mrs. Christine Nuttall

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**Recommendation:** Members are requested to view the DVD and note its content.

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#### Background

- 1 The Standards Board for England (the Board) have produced a new DVD to help Monitoring Officers, Members and Standards Committees understand their obligations under the recently revised Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 25th September 2007.

#### Introduction

- 2 The DVD uses a fictional scenario to explore a number of aspects of the Code, following the story of a group of Members and local authority officers as they prepare to discuss a highly controversial planning application.
- 3 As the plot unfolds, the story addresses areas that can cause confusion and presents solutions to potential difficulties. Training sections and commentary are interspersed with the drama and explores issues in more detail. Among the rules discussed are those on declaring interests, disclosing confidential information and bullying.

#### Use of the DVD

- 4 The DVD will be of particular value to new and continuing Members who need to increase their understanding of certain points of the revised Code.
- 5 The Monitoring Officer is planning to make use of the DVD in a further programme of training workshops designed for Members including Town/Parish Council Members.
- 6 The workshops are due to commence in November and will run on a weekly basis concentrating on the provisions of the revised Code.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial Implications

- 7 Training sessions will be capable of being accommodated within the Council's existing training budget.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 8 Training for Members in respect of the Code of Conduct and generally in respect of the ethical framework is an essential part of the Standards Committee's responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.

### Equality

- 9 No issues of equality have been identified in this report.

## **Conclusions**

- 10 Training is essential to enable Members to acquire the key competencies to comply with the Model Code of Conduct and to significantly enhance good Corporate Governance. The DVD will help facilitate such training.

## **Risk Assessment Statement**

- 11 Training and development is essential in order to achieve high standards of conduct in public life. Without adequate training standards are likely to fall thus diminishing public confidence in local democracy. The risk of this happening at the present moment is considered to be low.

**Sources of Information:** DVD – The Code of Conduct – The Code Uncovered

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