

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 9TH JULY 2008 AT 7PM

GUIDANCE FOR COMPLAINANTS AND THOSE IN RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS

REPORT OF: Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision No

Purpose Of Report

1. To approve some notes that may assist a complainant or a Councillor in receipt of the complaint to initially see their way forward through the Standards Committee structure.

Recommendations

2. **To discuss the procedure notes and make changes/additions as appropriate.**

Background

3. Members will be aware of the new procedure that came into operation on 8th May 2008 whereby claims of a breach of the Members Code of Conduct affecting a District Council or Parish/Town Councillor in Mid Sussex comes to Assessment Sub Committee Hearing of the Mid Sussex Standards Committee.
 - 3.1 At **Appendix 1** you will find a short note to assist those wishing to make a complaint to understand the procedure that will be followed. At **Appendix 2** you will see a note to assist a Member in receipt of a complaint. Both Appendices set out the basic procedure and some further detail may be required.
 - 3.2 The cases is vary greatly and frequently specific advice is needed for a Member in receipt of a complaint. However, Members may feel that further information should be given about the preparation of a response.

Financial Implications

4. The investigation of complaints is an expensive business with a minimum cost of £3,000 for a Full Hearing and many thousands of pounds for a more complex case. It is important that the procedures are done correctly to avoid even more expensive appeals in the High Court.

Other Material Implications

5. No complaints alleging breach of the members code of conduct have been received since the 8th May 2008 and a return accordingly has been made to the Standards Board for England.

Background Papers

Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. The Local Assessment of Complaints Guidance May 2008.