

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 JUNE 2012

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2012

1. STANDARDS REGIME

- 1.1.** The Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 8 June 2012, considered a report by the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer updating the position regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 relating to the ethical standards regime. Specific reference was made to the requirement for all local authorities to adopt a Code of Conduct (although there would no longer be a national mandatory Code).
- 1.2.** It was noted that the LGA had now published a model Code of Conduct for Councils to consider adopting as had the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Kent Secretaries Group had considered both of these models and drafted a Code of Conduct based on the best elements of those Codes and of the current Code. The draft Code had been amended following the recent issue by the Government of draft regulations relating to disclosable pecuniary interests. The Kent Secretaries Group was now looking at other disclosable interests. It was hoped that all Councils in Kent would be recommended to adopt the same Code.
- 1.3.** The Committee considered the draft Code. It was noted that the commencement date for the new regime was likely to be 1 July 2012, but there was little chance of being in a position to make a recommendation to the next meeting of the Council regarding the adoption of a new Code.
- 1.4.** During the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that unless the Government responded to the consultation on the draft regulations with transitional arrangements, there would be a period of time without a Code of Conduct. The Committee felt that, in the circumstances, it would be sensible to continue with the existing Code of Conduct until a new Code is adopted, although the Monitoring Officer advised that the existing Code of Conduct did not comply with the requirements of the Localism Act.
- 1.5. RECOMMENDED: That the Council continue with the existing Code of Conduct as an advisory Code until a new Code is adopted.**