

Item No. 15.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 November 2016	Meeting Name: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
Report title:		Review of arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Law and Democracy	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committee note the issues outlined in this report.
2. That the committee agree the amendments to the arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011 contained in Appendix A.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) provides the framework for dealing with allegations concerning the conduct of members.
4. The Act requires local authorities to have arrangements to investigate allegations and make decisions on them. The arrangements have been in place since 1 July 2012 and officers have regularly reviewed their working and consider minor amendments when required.
5. Following the meeting of the standards committee on 24 April 2013 further amendments were made to deal with concerns raised by members. These amendments were agreed by the standards committee on 11 June 2013.
6. With the formation of the audit, governance and standards committee has meant other changes are required.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. The proposed changes are shown in Appendix A.
8. In addition officers are proposing no amendments to the code of conduct; however officers would value member’s comments particularly concerning interests other than disclosable pecuniary interests. The current code of conduct is shown in Appendix B.

Community impact statement

9. Clear arrangements concerning the accountability of members are very important promoting high standards of conduct. In addition it is important in aiding the decision-making process and helping to boost public confidence in the council. These arrangements ensure that members of the public are aware of the process in place to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained within the council.

Resource implications

10. Maintaining a standards committee and undertaking investigations do have cost implications; however these can be maintained within current budgets. A report detailing the number of complaints for 2015/16 and the cost of investigating those complaints will be brought to the audit, governance and standards committee in February 2017.

Legal implications

11. The specific legal implications relating to this report have been included in the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Constitution http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/HowTheCouncilWorks/councilconstitution.html	Constitutional Team Southwark Council 2nd Floor, PO Box 64529, London SE1P 5LX	Constitutional Team 020 7525 5485
The Localism Act 2011	Legal Services Southwark Council 2nd Floor, PO Box 64529, London SE1P 5LX	Norman Coombe 020 7525 7678

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Proposed amendments to arrangements
Appendix B	Member code of conduct

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Doreen Forrester-Brown, Director of Law and Democracy	
Report Author	Norman Coombe, Head of Corporate Team	
Version	Final	
Dated	1 November 2016	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director for Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	28 October 2016	