

**AGENDA ITEM:
SUMMARY**



Report for:	Standards Committee
Date of meeting:	9th March 2017
PART:	I
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Contact:	Mark Brookes - Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer Directline: 01442 228236, internal extension: 2236 Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk
Purpose of report:	To advise Members of the details of a training session for Members of the Standards Committee to be held at the meeting on 9 th March 2017.
Recommendation	That Members be requested to read the attached documents in readiness for the training session to be facilitated by the Monitoring Officer.
Corporate objectives:	The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members of the Council will assist the Council in achieving its priorities of performance excellence and reputation and profile delivery.
Implications: 'Value For Money Implications'	There are financial and efficiency costs to the Council in having to deal with complaints made under the Code of Conduct. There are, therefore, value for money benefits to the Council in striving to ensure that complaints against Members are minimised as far as possible and any complaints that are received are dealt with as cost effectively as possible.
Risk Implications	The risk to the Council in not having in place a robust local standards regime could damage its reputation for

	good governance and undermine public confidence in the Council as a whole.
Monitoring Officer	This is a report prepared by the Solicitor to the Council in his capacity as Monitoring Officer.
Consultees:	None
Background papers:	Code of Conduct

BACKGROUND REPORT

1. The Monitoring Officer has not received any standards complaints and it is therefore proposed to use the opportunity to hold a training session for Members of the Committee at the meeting on 9th March which will be facilitated by the Monitoring Officer.
2. The training session will be based around a completely fictitious complaint made by an officer against a member of Dacorum Borough Council. Members will be asked to consider how they should approach conducting a hearing into the complaint. It would assist if Members could read the attached documents before the meeting so that they are familiar with the details of the complaint. Christopher Gaunt, the Deputy Monitoring Officer, will also be attending to speak to his investigation report and to be available to be questioned by Members.
3. The documents attached are as follows –
 - A copy of the complaint made by Mrs White (a Senior Planning Officer) against Councillor Black of Dacorum Borough Council (a member of the Development Control Committee) alleging that Councillor Black failed to treat Mrs White and other members of the Planning Department with respect and bullied them.
 - A pre-hearing summary of the complaint prepared by the Monitoring Officer.
 - A copy of the investigation report.
 - A copy of the Council's procedure for dealing with complaints.
4. A copy of the Council's Code of Conduct is not attached as the relevant paragraphs of the Code are referred to in the pre-hearing summary and in the investigation report. The Council's complaints procedure sets out at appendix 3 the procedure for the hearing. The session will be led by the Monitoring Officer and largely take the form of an informal discussion as to what are the key questions which emerge both from

the complaint and what is said at the hearing itself as it progresses and how these should be addressed by the Members. It may be that other facts come to light during the session and Members will be asked to consider how they would respond to these new issues.

5. Members will be asked, in consultation with the Independent Person, to arrive at a decision as to whether or not Councillor Black has failed to follow the Code of Conduct and, if so, the reasons for their decision. If the Members decide that Councillor Black has not followed the Code of Conduct they will, in consultation with the Independent Person, be asked to consider what action, if any, should be taken against Councillor Black. Paragraph 8 of the complaints procedure sets out the range of actions available to the Standards Committee.
6. Just to emphasise that the scenario is completely made up and any resemblance to real persons living or dead is purely coincidental.