

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Subscription to Standards Exchange</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</b>

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To report on the outcome Chiltern District Council's trial subscription to Standards Exchange and consider whether it would be beneficial for South Bucks to subscribe.

#### 2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

There is no direct link to the Council's objectives but maintaining high standards of conduct among members of the Council contributes to the effective governance of the authority.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Standards Exchange is a new on-line service for members of committees with responsibility for standards issues, Independent Persons and monitoring officers. It is run by Hoey Ainscough Associates who previously worked for the Standards Board and provides an interactive forum, news on local and national standards issues, shares good practice and provides training materials. Subscribers also benefit from reduced rates on Hoey Ainscough's training courses and workshops. The annual subscription fee is £300 and this gives unlimited access to members and officers of an authority.
- 3.2 At their January meeting the Committee noted that Chiltern District Council had recently subscribed to Standards Exchange on a trial basis. Officers agreed to update the Committee on the outcome of that trial, to inform a decision on the possible benefits to South Bucks of taking out a subscription.

#### 4. Discussion/Update

- 4.1 In the absence of the advice and guidance previously provided nationally by Standards for England, Standards Exchange is currently the only website dedicated to providing independent assistance and guidance on standards issues. The on-line Forum provides a useful opportunity to share best practice and the monitoring officer used the precedent protocol on the role of Independent Persons published on Standards Exchange
- 4.2 Chiltern has taken advantage of the reduced rates for specialist and reasonably-priced training events organised by Hoey Ainscough both for monitoring officers and Independent Persons. In view of these benefits Chiltern decided to renew its subscription.
- 4.3 Recently independent persons from both South Bucks and Chiltern attended a workshop on the role of the independent person organised by Hoey Ainscough and feedback was very positive.

#### 5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

Financial - The annual subscription is currently £300

Legal - None

Risks issues - None

Equalities - None

**6. Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to consider whether the Council should subscribe to the Standards Exchange service at a cost of £300 per annum.

<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	N/A
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<b>Background Papers:</b>	None