

SUBJECT:	Subscription to Standards Exchange
REPORT OF:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services

1. Purpose of Report

This report considers the use made of the on-line Standards Exchange services over the past year and the benefits of continued membership

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

There is no direct link to the Council's objectives but the Council has a statutory obligation to adopt a complaints procedure and consider complaints about the conduct of District and Town/Parish Councillors.

3. Background and Discussion

- 3.1 The Committee agreed last year to renew the Council's subscription to this on-line service for standards committee members, Independent Persons and monitoring officers set up by Hoey Ainscough Associates. Members will recall that Standards Exchange provides an interactive forum, news on local and national standards issues, shares good practice, highlights events and provides training materials. The annual subscription fee is £300 and this gives unlimited access to members and officers
- 3.2 In the absence of the advice and guidance previously provided nationally by Standards for England, Standards Exchange remains the only website dedicated to providing independent assistance and guidance on standards issues. The monitoring officer has used precedents published on Standards Exchange and together with the Independent Persons, has taken advantage of their specialist and reasonably-priced training events. The on-line Forum also provides a useful opportunity to share best practice.
- 3.3 Independent Members may wish to give a verbal update at the meeting on their experience and use of the service before the Committee considers whether to continue with the Council's subscription.

4. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

Financial - The cost of subscription for 1 year is £300

Legal - As set out in the report

Risks issues - None

Equalities - None

5. Recommendation

The Committee is invited to note the information in the report and consider whether to renew the Council's subscription to Standards Exchange.

Portfolio Holder	N/A
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Background Papers:	None

