



Standards Committee

Date: 11 March 2014
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe Bucks

Membership

Chairman: Councillor Mrs L M Clarke OBE

Vice Chairman: Councillor Ms J D Wassell

Councillors: I Bates, D J Carroll, Mrs G A Jones, J A Savage,
D A C Shakespeare OBE and R Wilson

Independent Persons
(Observers): G Houalla and M Pearce

Parish Council Observers: Parish Cllr J Sherlock and Parish Cllr Mrs V Smith

Agenda

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For further information, please contact Emma Lund 01494 421635,
Emma.Lund@wycombe.gov.uk

Agenda Item 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests by Members relating to items on the agenda. If any Member is uncertain as to whether an interest should be disclosed, he or she is asked if possible to contact the District Solicitor prior to the meeting.

Members are reminded that if they are declaring an interest, they should state the nature of that interest whether or not they are required to withdraw from the meeting.

Agenda Item 3

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 4 JUNE 2013

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2013 (previously circulated).

Agenda Item 4

THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 – STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS

Officer Contact: David Ruddock Ext: 3252 (01494 421252)
Email: david_ruddock@wycombe.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

The Standards Committee is invited to note the presentation to be given by the District Solicitor in respect of the current Localism Act 2011 standards regime and how the new standards arrangements have operated at Wycombe since they were introduced in July 2012.

Corporate Implications

1. Sections 27 and 28 of the Localism Act 2011 require the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members, to adopt a Code of Conduct which is consistent with the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, and to have arrangements in place for the investigation of allegations and for the making of decisions on allegations.
2. A robust and effective standards regime to ensure high standards of conduct amongst elected Members both at District and Parish level, is essential to ensure probity in all decision making of the authorities of the District.

Conclusion

That the Committee notes the information contained in the presentation.

Agenda Item 5

COMPLAINTS/COMMENTS/COMPLIMENTS - INFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENTS QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2013)

Officer contact: Jean Roberts

Ext: 3202 (01494 421202)

Email: Jean.roberts@wycombe.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the attached information in relation to complaints, comments and compliments for the period 1 October to 31 December 2013 (quarter 3); and
- (ii) recommend to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee the adoption of revised terms of reference for the Standards Committee to allow for future complaints, comments and compliments information to be provided by means of an Information Sheet to members of the Standards Committee and Cabinet.

Corporate Implications

1. The establishment and maintenance of complaints procedures is conducive to the discharge of the Council's various functions and as such are authorised by Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. There are no financial implications.
3. A robust complaints procedure assists in minimising the risks to the Council arising from complaints.

Background

4. Quarterly information is supplied to all business units which record complaints, comments or compliments on ServiceMail, and then composite information is provided for SMB.
5. Further complaints statistics are also incorporated as Local Performance Indicators by the Policy and Communications Team.

Quarter 3 Report

6. The information and charts for the quarter are attached herewith, together with a summarised report on LG Ombudsman complaints to date. The target for complaints to be responded to in target is 90%.
 - (a) Answering complaints within target (10 working days):

This quarter there was a drop in the total percentage of complaints within target from 96% last quarter to 90%, which may have been due to the Christmas holiday period (of 57 complaints logged, 6 were out of target).

(b) Review of Complaints and Improvements as a result of complaints:

Three improvements have been recorded for this quarter.

(c) Complaints to the LG Ombudsman:

There have been no reports issued or negative findings to date. There are 3 ongoing complaints, one of which has been responded to and we are awaiting the LGO decision. Thirteen decisions have been received this year to date.

With regard to the previous quarter's report I can advise that the LGO discontinued the investigation with regard to the homelessness complaint and found no fault with the Council's actions.

(d) Compliments Logging:

The total for compliments logged is 52 for this quarter, and the service area with the most compliments is Parking Services again with 14, followed by Environmental Health with 10 and the Customer Service Centre with 6.

Current Issues

Joint Waste Service Complaints

7. The Joint Waste team are based at Chiltern District Council. There were a considerable number of additional contacts arising from the rollout of the increased recycling service across the Wycombe District which commenced in October, which included many missed collections and delays in the supply of new recycling bins and containers. These persisted at a higher level from October through to December, but are reducing.
8. We collect rubbish and recycling from 71,000 properties in the district, 66,000 of which experienced some changes under the new service. It's not unusual with a rollout on this scale to have higher numbers of calls and enquiries: in the past, service changes have been made on an incremental basis.
9. We are advised by the Joint Waste Team manager that there were approximately 2,500 contacts/requests for service during this period and 8 Stage 1 complaints were logged; in addition 7 Stage 2 complaints were responded to. It is therefore not possible to report an accurate figure for the number of complaints for Quarter 3. Only the Stage 2 complaints are included in this quarter's figures above, as the waste team have separate reporting arrangements. The team has been reminded of WDC's complaint definition in relation to the types of complaints received and they advise that reporting to us will comply with our requirements for future quarters and will be looked at anew

for the forthcoming financial year. It is important to note that the LG Ombudsman will hold Wycombe DC responsible for any complaint in the Wycombe District, and will expect the resident to have completed our own procedure. The Head of Environment (Caroline Hughes) will be meeting with the Waste Team management shortly to agree a way forward for improvements in the area of complaint recording and reporting following recent discussions on the matter.

10. There is now one Ombudsman complaint arising from this period which will be responded to shortly.

Complaints Received – Car Parks Automatic Number Plate Recognition system Trial

11. In the information sheet for the last quarter, there were a large number of complaints with regard to the new ANPR system in some of our car parks. The Parking Services Manager advises that the number of complaints has now reduced considerably as customers have got used to the new system, and particular issues causing problems in the last quarter have now been resolved with the contractor. The number of complaints logged has reduced from 120 to 7 for this quarter.

Conclusions

12. As this information does not relate to Standards, it is recommended that the Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to allow for future complaints, comments and compliments information to be provided by means of an Information Sheet to members of the Committee and Cabinet. The Committee is therefore asked to refer the revised terms of reference to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee, as a revision of the Constitution, for recommendation to Council.

Agenda Item 5

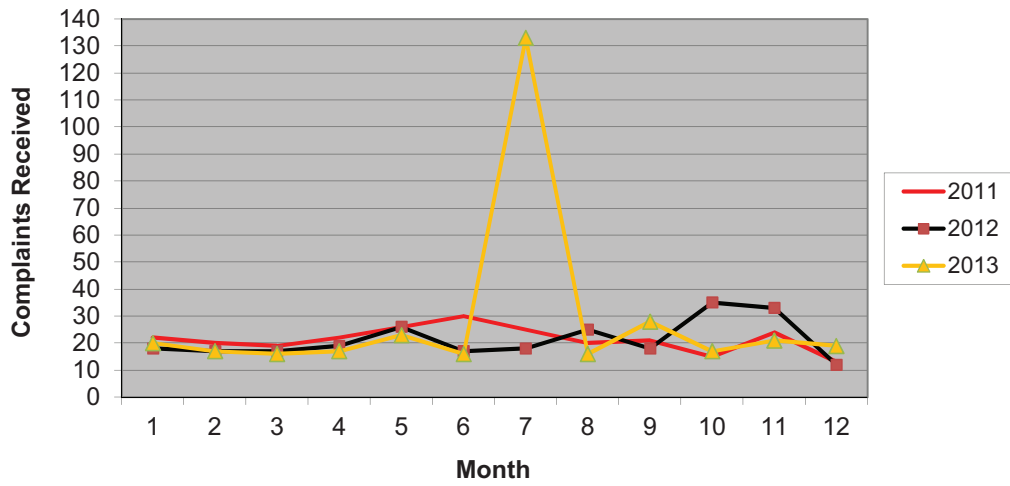
Items by Type by Business Unit by In Target between 01/10/2013 and 31/12/2013		
Business Unit		Total
Comments		
Building Control	In Target	1
Sports Centres Client	In Target	1
Total for Comments		2
Complaints		
Communications	In Target	1
Council Tax	Out of Target	2
	In Target	8
Customer Service Centre	Out of Target	1
	In Target	3
Development Management	In Target	11
Environmental Health	In Target	2
Homelessness	In Target	1
Housing Applications	Out of Target	1
	In Target	2
Housing Benefit	Out of Target	1
	In Target	1
Housing Management	Out of Target	1
	In Target	1
Museum - Wycombe	In Target	1
Parking - Off-street	In Target	7
Refuse	In Target	7
Spatial Planning	In Target	2
Sports Centres Client	In Target	3
Visiting and Investigation	In Target	1
Total for Complaints		57

Items by Type by Business Unit by In Target between 01/10/2013 and 31/12/2013

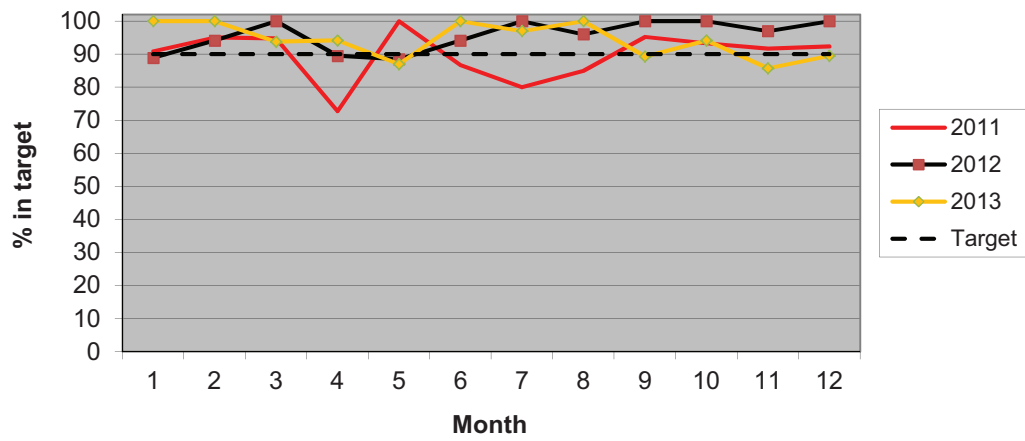
Business Unit		Total
Compliments		
Building Control	In Target	1
Cohesion	In Target	1
Community Safety	In Target	1
Corporate Administration	In Target	1
Council Tax	In Target	3
Customer Service Centre	In Target	6
Demo & Legal HoS & PA/Complaints Officer	In Target	1
Development Management	In Target	7
Environmental Health	In Target	10
Green Space Contracts	In Target	1
Homelessness	In Target	3
Housing Applications	In Target	1
Parking - Off-street	In Target	14
Refuse	In Target	1
Spatial Planning	In Target	1
Total for Compliments		52
Internal Client Compliments		
Accountancy	In Target	1
Community Safety	In Target	1
Development Management	In Target	1
Legal Services	In Target	1
Spatial Planning	In Target	1
Total for Internal Client Compliments		5

Service Improvements from 01/10/2013 to 31/12/2013		
Business Unit	Subject	Improvement
Environmental Health	Health and Safety Inspections	Complaint discussed with officer
Housing Applications	Administration of Housing Application	Discussed with officers concerned
Parking - Off-street	ANPR Car Park system	Meeting with suppliers to ensure problem does not arise again, and review of trial before roll out

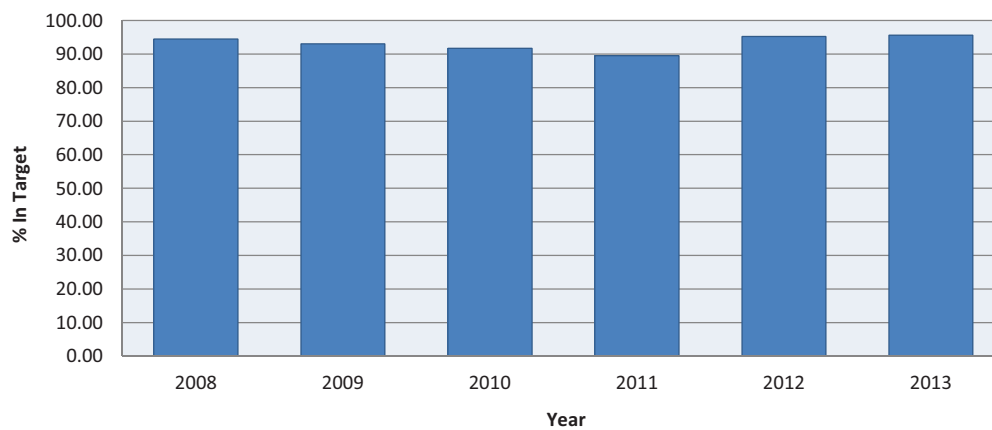
**WDC Complaints Received
by Month 2011-2013**









**WDC Complaints in target
2011-2013**
















WDC Complaints In Target 2008 - 2013



Wycombe District Council
Complaints/Compliments - Year on Year
Comparison

		Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			
		Target for Q1	Outturn Apr - Jun		Target for Q2	Outturn Jul - Sep		Target for Q3	Outturn Oct - Dec		Target for Q4	Outturn Jan-Mar	Adjusted Year to date	
Compliments and Complaints														
2012-13 Year	Number of compliments received	n/a	95	n/a	n/a	89	n/a	n/a	108		n/a	84	386	
2013-14 Year	Number of compliments received	n/a	67	n/a	n/a	84	n/a	n/a	52	n/a				
2012-13 Year	Number of complaints received	n/a	65	n/a	n/a	62	n/a	n/a	80		n/a	53	256	
2013-14 Year	Number of complaints received	n/a	56	n/a	n/a	177	n/a	n/a	57	n/a				
2012-13 Year	Percentage of complaints answered within 10 working days	90%	90.63%		90%	96.77%		90%	98.75%		n/a	98.11%	96.14%	
2012-13 Year	Number answered within 10 working days		58			60			79			52	249	
2012-13 Year	Number of complaints		64			62			80			53	259	
2013-14 Year	Percentage of complaints answered within 10 working days	90%	92.86%			96.05%			89.47%					
2013-14 Year	Number answered within 10 working days		52			170			51					
2013-14 Year	Number of complaints		56			177			57					
2012-13 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: SPEED OF RESPONSE	n/a	95.12%		n/a	90.32%		n/a	91.67%		n/a	87.50%	91.96%	
2012-13 Year	Number of people satisfied with SPEED		39			28			22			14	103	
2012-13 Year	Number of responses logged		41			31			24			16	112	

Wycombe District Council
Complaints/Compliments - Year on Year
Comparison

		Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			
		Target for Q1	Outturn Apr - Jun		Target for Q2	Outturn Jul - Sep		Target for Q3	Outturn Oct - Dec		Target for Q4	Outturn Jan-Mar	Adjusted Year to date	
2013-14 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: SPEED OF RESPONSE		100.00%			86.36%			89.47%					
2013-14 Year	Number of people satisfied with SPEED		12			19			17					
2013-14 Year	Number of responses logged		12			22			19					
2012-13 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: OUTCOME	n/a	90.24%		n/a	93.55%		n/a	87.50%		n/a	81.25%	89.29%	
2012-13 Year	Number of people satisfied with OUTCOME		37			29			21			13	100	
2012-13 Year	Number of responses logged		41			31			24			16	112	
2013-14 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: OUTCOME		83.33%			63.64%			84.21%					
2013-14 Year	Number of people satisfied with OUTCOME		10			14			16					
2013-14 Year	Number of responses logged		12			22			19					
2012-13 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: COMPLAINT HANDLING	n/a	87.80%		n/a	87.10%		n/a	87.50%		90	87.50%	87.50%	
2012-13 Year	Number of people satisfied with COMPLAINT HANDLING		36			27			21			14	98	
2012-13 Year	Number of responses logged		41			31			24			16	112	
2013-14 Year	Satisfaction with complaints handling: COMPLAINT HANDLING		91.67%			77.27%			84.21%					
2013-14 Year	Number of people satisfied with COMPLAINT HANDLING		11			17			16					
2013-14 Year	Number of responses logged		12			22			19					
Symbols Used:														
	Exceeds target by more than 5%													
	Within +/- 5% of target													
	More than 5% below target													

OMBUDSMAN ONGOING CASES – 2013/14

Service Mail Ref	Date Received	Ombudsman Ref	Summary of complaint	Comments
11888	24.01.14	13 010 918/sxp	Builder received incorrect advice from building control regarding a suspended floor, which allegedly failed when installed. Subject to WDC insurance claim which was refused.	Provisional View received 08.01.14 to discontinue investigation. Subsequently LGO enquiry letter received 24.01.14 and reply is being considered with regard to legal implications.
11674	19.12.13	13 008 086	Council did not respond to her concerns that she was illegally evicted from private rented accommodation in 2012 and approached Council as homeless and has not offered her sufficient advice and assistance in finding accommodation.	Reply sent 24.01.14
12125	23.01.14	13 016 364/sxp	Complainant suffered 7-10 weeks of missed or very delayed refuse collections with the result that complainant took rubbish himself to the tip and believes he should have compensation for this.	Reply due 04.02.14
				3

Service Mail Ref	Date Received (Date closed)	Ombudsman Ref	Summary of complaint	Comments	OMBUDSMAN CATEGORY		OMBUDSMAN SERVICE AREA									
					Ombudsman Discontinue	Outside Jurisdiction	P/BC	Local Tax	ASB	Hsg	Env Serv	Hsg	Benefits	Transport & Highways	Licen sing	Corp & Other
11077	13.05.13 13.05.13	13 001 484	Complaint about the unauthorised use of land near complainant's home. He says the Council could have acted more quickly about the unauthorised use. It would then have been able to refuse to accept a retrospective planning application made by the site occupier to regularise the use.	Direct Ombudsman: Not investigated	NI											
11211	31.05.13 (31.05.13)	13 002 492	Complaint that the Council did not inform complainant about a planning application for development at a sports club and so he was denied the opportunity to make representations about the proposed development.	Direct Ombudsman: Not investigated	1		1									
10935	09/05/2013	12 020 500/DS	1. Complaint that the Council reneged on an agreement it reached with complainant to grant him a lease for land next to his home and increased the proposed rent and fees. 2. Complaint that an officer in Estate Services ignored his emails and failed to tell him what was happening when the Council was negotiating with a HA regarding the land.	Investigation Complete & satisfied with Council Actions	1		1									
10735	23.07.13 (23.07.13)	13 006 132	Mr A, a planning consultant, complains on behalf of client who wished to extend his home. Complainant states the Council delayed unreasonably in coming to a decision on a planning application. He says this delay meant his client had to pay Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of over £18,000 which was introduced shortly before the complaint.	Direct Ombudsman: Not investigated - Outside Jurisdiction												1
10753	18.03.13	12 018 316/sxp	Council has handled the planning issues relating to their property since January 2008 to date. They say this has caused them to suffer significant financial losses; large amounts of time; emotional distress; and defamation of character.	Direct Ombudsman: Not investigated - Outside Jurisdiction			1									

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Service Mail Ref	Date Received (Date closed)	Ombudsman Ref	Summary of complaint	Comments	Ombudsman Discontinue	Outside Jurisdiction	
11466	10.07.13 05.11.13	13 002 723	Housing Application complaints : (a) the case officer relied on erroneous information that complainant was intentionally homeless; (b) Delay in completing the review of the housing application; (c) Delay in response to Data Protection application for a copy of the mortgage account statement referred to in the section 184 decision. (d) after the section 202 review decision was made in August 2012, the Council made her an unsuitable offer of accommodation and it took too long to make a suitable offer.	Investigation Complete & satisfied with Council Actions	NI	IC-S	
11464	21/06/2013 07.11.13	12 017 318	Incorrect assessment and procedures relating to a planning application	Investigation Complete & satisfied with Council Actions		1	
11468	21.05.13 07.11.13	13 002 723	Incorrect assessment and procedures relating to a planning application	Investigation Complete & satisfied with Council Actions		1	
					3	5	5 13

P/BC	Local Tax	ASB	Hsg	Env Serv	Hsg	Benefits	Transport & Highways	Licensing	Corp & Other
			1						
1									
1									
7	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1

Agenda Item 6

UPDATE ON STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

Officer contact: David Ruddock DDI: 01494 421253
Email: david_ruddock@wycombe.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

No decision is required.

Corporate Implications

1. Sections 27 and 28 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members, to adopt a Code of Conduct which is consistent with the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, and to have arrangements in place for the investigation of allegations and for the making of decisions on allegations.

Executive Summary

2. The Committee is asked to note the updated list of standards complaints that have been dealt with under the new Standards regime since its introduction in July 2012 (Appendix A).

Background and Issues

3. The Committee is asked to:
 - (a) Note the updated list of standards complaints that have been dealt with under the new regime since its introduction in July 2012;
 - (b) Note that none of them have been considered serious enough to warrant investigation;
 - (c) Note that no complaints have recently been received.

Background Papers

Wycombe District Council arrangements for Standards Allegations and Localism Act 2011.

Agenda Item 6 Appendix A

Standards Complaints						
Complaints submitted under Localism Act procedure:						
Ref No	Date Recd	Complainant	Against Councillor:	Council	Outcome	Date
SC1	22/06/2012	Mr David Bourne	Brian Mapletoft	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC2	22/06/2012	Mr David Bourne	John Rhodes	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC3	22/06/2012	Mr David Bourne	David Brown	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC4	05/07/2012	Mr David Bourne	Wanda Brown	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC5	05/07/2012	Mr David Bourne	Natasha Howard	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC6	05/07/2012	Mr David Bourne	David Thompson	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC7	05/07/2012	Mr David Bourne	Judy Weaver	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC8	05/07/2012	Mr David Bourne	David Brown (Complaint 2)	Hazlemere PC	No Breach	05/09/2012
SC9	23/07/2012	Dr Linda Derrick	Alex Collingwood	Wycombe DC	Complaint withdrawn	07/09/2012
SC10	23/07/2012	Dr Linda Derrick	Wendy Mallen	Wycombe DC	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation. Additional mentoring/support proposed.	21/11/2012
SC11	24/07/2012	Mr David Johncock	Jeff Herschel	Chepping Wycombe PC	Local Resolution - amendment of relevant minutes	22/08/2012
SC12	25/07/2012	Mr David Johncock	Ian Forbes	Chepping Wycombe PC	Local Resolution - amendment of relevant minutes	22/08/2012
SC13	23/10/2012	Cllr Walford Woolf	Bill Bendyshe-Brown	Wycombe DC and Princes Risborough Town Council	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation and local resolution proposed.	06/12/2012
SC14	30/11/2012	Cllr Brian Mapletoft	Duncan Sugg	Hazlemere PC	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation.	20/03/2013
SC15	30/11/2012	Cllr Brian Mapletoft	Willie Macleod	Hazlemere PC	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation.	20/03/2013
SC16	30/11/2012	Cllr Brian Mapletoft	David Brown	Hazlemere PC	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation.	20/03/2013
SC17	04/12/2012	Cllr Natasha Howard	David Brown	Hazlemere PC	Potential breaches not serious and local Resolution proposed	19/02/2013
SC18	04/12/2012	Cllr Natasha Howard	Wanda Brown	Hazlemere PC	Potential breaches not serious and local Resolution proposed	19/02/2013
SC19	04/12/2012	Cllr Natasha Howard	John Rhodes	Hazlemere PC	Potential breaches not serious and local Resolution proposed	19/02/2013
SC20	04/12/2012	Cllr Natasha Howard	Karen Farrell	Hazlemere PC	Potential breaches not serious and local Resolution proposed	19/02/2013
SC21	27/12/2012	Mr Anthony Howard	Duncan Sugg	Hazlemere PC	Potential breach not serious enough for investigation.	08/03/2013
SC22	02/01/2013	Cllr Brian Mapletoft	David Brown	Hazlemere PC	Withdrawn as councillor has resigned.	03/04/2013
SC23	02/01/2013	Cllr Brian Mapletoft	John Rhodes	Hazlemere PC	Withdrawn as councillor has resigned.	03/04/2013
SC24	19/02/2013	Mr Anthony Howard	David Brown	Hazlemere PC	Withdrawn as councillor has resigned.	03/04/2013
SC25	19/02/2013	Mr Anthony Howard	Judy Weaver	Hazlemere PC	No breach of Code as complaint relates to actions of Parish Council as a whole; in addition events occurred mainly between 2008-2011 and therefore out of time.	05/09/2013

Agenda Item 7

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)

Agenda Item 8

URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)