

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: The Monitoring Officer

REPORT NUMBER: **K55**

TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 9 July 2010

FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL RETURN 2010

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report upon the Annual Return submitted to Standards For England on behalf of the Committee in respect of its performance for 2009/10.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee identifies any measures that it would wish to pursue with a view to improving performance or delivering outcomes.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None directly arising from this report, but financial implications could arise dependent upon what measures, if any, that the Committee resolves to take.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Significant Business Risk No. 5 (Governance). Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
The Committee is considered to be under-performing.	Low	Marginal	Ensure complaints continue to be handled within prescribed timescales & returns to SFE filed as required.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**

- 5.1 Not directly relevant to this report.

6. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 6.1 At its meeting on 7 April 2010, the Committee considered Paper J214 containing a list of questions from Standards For England on performance of the Committee over the preceding year. The questions were required to be answered as part of the Committee's Annual Return. Members will be aware that the Annual Return is obligatory and that SFE has statutory powers to remove standards committee functions if a committee is considered to be under-performing.

- 6.2 The Committee made suggestions on how to respond to the questions and the Annual return was filed by the Monitoring Officer on 13 April 2010 (i.e. within the prescribed period).
- 6.3 It is not known at this stage whether the Annual Return will be required in 2011 and this may be a factor in the Committee's consideration of this report. Nonetheless, the Table below summarises the areas in which the Committee was assessed and the Committee may wish to identify any areas in which it would wish to become more pro-active.

Category	Response	Improvement?
Communication – Annual Report	The Committee produces an Annual report. It contains details of training, functions undertaken & other information. Report is available on the Council's website & on the agenda for Full Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a personal statement from the Chairman • Information about the Code • Details of length of time for complaint handling • Circulate to PC/TC's
Publicising Complaints	Complaints leaflet available in offices & libraries. Complaints register open to public inspection. Hearings open to the public. Findings of breach are publicised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise all complaints in local Press • Articles about complaints in newsletter
Communication work of the Committee	Pages on Council's website. Guidance notes issued. Observance of committee proceedings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing newsletter • (NB. This is being pursued with SCC) • Improve web pages
Influence	Senior Officer (Andrew Hunkin) has attended SC meeting. Council adopted whistle-blowing policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite other senior officers to attend Committee • Formal meetings between SC members & senior officers to discuss standards • Portfolio holder for standards

Category	Response	Improvement?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocol with other councils for partnership working outlining standards of behaviour
Training & support	<p>Training provided to SC members.</p> <p>Guidance notes issued.</p> <p>Training for clerks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally assess BDC members training needs Training on chairing skills
Investigations	2 investigations completed in 2009/10. No external investigators used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure measures in place to secure quality of investigations
Relations with Parish/Town Councils	<p>Training provided for clerks.</p> <p>Steps taken to assist PC's with problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for councillors Training on FOI, planning Formal agreement with SALC on supporting standards for PC/TC's Parish liaison officer

7. **APPENDICES**

None

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None

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