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**REPORT TO:** FULL COUNCIL

**DATE:** 10 March 2011

**SUBJECT:** PART 'B' REFERRALS FROM STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
ON 20 JANUARY 2011

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## 24 **Blogging and Social Networking**

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer submitted a report (previously circulated), the purpose of which was to consider proposed guidance for local authority, parish and town councillors in respect of blogging, social networking and other methods of communication.

Standards for England had issued guidance on blogging and social networking. This guidance was attached as Annex 1 to the report. In addition, Annex 2 to the report contained additional advice for situations when Members may find themselves the subject of derogatory comments in publications of any nature.

It was noted that electronic forms of publication were being used increasingly by councillors as an alternative method of communication with their constituents. Whilst in general this kind of communication was to be encouraged, guidance was considered essential to ensure that Members were aware of some of the pitfalls of blogging and social networking, particularly given the rapid and widespread distribution of this format. It was considered that the guidance would help Members to ensure that they were compliant with the Code of Conduct.

### **Resolved**

Council be recommended to adopt the guidance on blogging as detailed in the report and that the guidance be distributed to all local authority, parish and town councillors.

**Independent/Parish Members**

The Council Solicitor & Monitoring Officer reminded members that the term of membership of the Standards Committee for Independent and Parish members was to expire in May 2011. It was considered that, in order to allow time for the Localism Bill to become law and to cover the transitional period, the term be extended for two years as it would be difficult to recruit replacement members when the system was to be abolished.

**Resolved**

That Council be recommended to extend the term of membership of the current Independent and Parish members of the Standards Committee for a further two years from May 2011.