



# Ryedale District Council

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**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee

**DATE:** 24 January 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Council Solicitor  
Anthony Winship

**SUBJECT:** **Audit Commission: Assessment of  
Compliance with Code of Conduct**

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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the Audit Commission's Requirements for Assessment of Compliance with the Code of Conduct

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be noted and the Audit Commission be informed of the assessment of the Standards Committee for Ryedale District that the Code of Conduct was being complied with by Members of Ryedale District Council.

## 3.0 REPORT

- 3.1 As part of the Audit Commission's Use of Resources Assessment, the Council is required to undertake an assessment of standards of conduct, including how effectively members are complying with the code of conduct, the numbers and types of complaints received and review any action required as appropriate.
- 3.2 Members may recall that the Standards Committee meeting on 28 September 2006 resolved that the number of non referral/referral letters received from the Standards Board for England should be reported to the Standards Committee every six months. The Standards Committee meeting on 22 March 2007 received a list of non referral letters relating to allegations of misconduct by Members that the Monitoring Officer had received from the Standards Board for England for the period 1 April 2006 – 22 March 2007. A list of non referral letters relating to allegations of misconduct by Members that the Monitoring Officer has received from the Standards Board for England for the period 23 March 2007 – 24 January 2008 is attached as Annex 1. No referral letters have been received for that period of

time. No written complaints were made against Members of Ryedale District Council in that time period. Given that there have been no decisions to investigate there is no recommendation for specific training or a change in procedures resulting from those non referral letters.

- 3.3 To date there have been no complaints of alleged misconduct by members of Ryedale District Council referred to the Standards Committee by the Standards Board for England and there is no evidence that members of the Council are not complying with the requirements of the code of conduct.
- 3.4 Members and Officers undertook an Ethical Standards Self Assessment Survey. The Audit Commission published the Annual Audit and Inspection letter for 2004/2005 in March 2006. That letter included the following observations:-
- “49 Awareness and understanding were generally at high level for both officers and Members in all areas. Members all agreed the appropriate training had been given on conduct issues but half were unsure of the value of the Standards Committee
- 50 Respondents were clear about officer leadership and also reported open and constructive member officer communications. The Majority of respondents thought decision-making by members were transparent.”
- 3.5 Members of all political groups regularly consult me in my capacity as the Monitoring Officer on issues concerning declarations of interests. Monitoring Officer advice is often confirmed in writing for the sake of clarity. It is my perception that Members of Ryedale District Council take care to ensure that they comply with the Members Code of Conduct and show a willingness to discuss declaration of interest issues prior to Council and Committee meetings.
- 3.6 Members will recall that training on the Code of Conduct was arranged for newly elected and re-elected District and Parish Councillors after the May 2007 Local Government Elections. These training events were well attended. Members of Council were invited to attend the Standards Committee meeting on 20 September 2007 to watch the Standards Board Training DVD – “The Code Uncovered”.
- 3.7 Members will also recall that Mr Tony Kilner gave a presentation on the Governance Framework at a Member Briefing on 3 October 2007. Again this briefing was well attended and Mr Kilner was impressed by the level of interest shown by Members in Governance and constitution issues.
- 3.8 Finally, Members regularly update the Register of Financial and other Interests and the Register of Gifts.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Against this background it is considered that Members of the Standards Committee have a sufficient evidential basis to conclude that the Code of Conduct is being complied with by Members.

#### **Background Papers:**

None

#### **OFFICER CONTACT:**

Please contact Anthony Winship, Council Solicitor, if you require any further information on the contents of this Report. The Officer can be contacted at Ryedale House, Telephone 01653 600666 ext.267 or e-mail: [anthony.winship@ryedale.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.winship@ryedale.gov.uk)

**STANDARDS BOARD REFERRAL/NONREFERRAL LETTERS FOR YEAR  
23 MARCH 2007 – 24 JANUARY 2008**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Complaint</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Recommendation on Improved Training or Procedures</b>
05/10/07	Against one Parish Councillor	The allegation should not be investigated	No recommendation as no breach found