

Committee	Standards Committee
Date :	16 January 2012
Title	Review of the Standards Committee's Procedure for Hearings
Author	Monitoring Officer
Action :	To review and adopt revised procedure

Background

1. The Committee drew up a procedure for hearings of complaints against councillors in April 2011. This was based on the arrangements of other authorities, the procedure followed by the Adjudication Panel for Wales and a model presented at the Standards Conference in 2010.
2. Since then of course the Committee has held its first hearing. In light of that experience and of the mock hearing held at the 2011 Standards Conference a revised procedure has been prepared.

The New Procedure

3. A revised draft procedure is attached as an **Appendix**. The main changes are:

- A simpler, easier to read document
- A meeting between the Chair and the officer advising the committee to consider whether any further steps are required before the hearing.
- Combining the 'findings of fact' stage and the stage of deciding whether there has been a breach of the code.
- Simplification of the rules dealing with matters such as late evidence, non- attendance etc.
- The Chair to give an indication of the type of sanction being considered and giving the parties an opportunity to make representations before a decision on sanction is made.

Other documents

4. A 'script' was prepared for the Chair for the hearing, to facilitate the task of running the proceedings. In future, other documents could be prepared:

- Summary of the procedure during the hearing for distribution to all present
- A sheet listing the issues on which the committee should satisfy itself in order to come to a decision. A copy could also be circulated to the parties beforehand.

Recommendation

5. The Committee's is invited to comments on the hearings process and to consider and approve the attached procedure.