

**Standards Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2009**

**Report of the Monitoring Officer**

**Standards Committee Website**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To report on the existing content of the Council's website in relation to the work of the Standards Committee and to seek any views or comments on potential improvements or enhancements for the future.

**Background**

2. On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2008, the Committee approved its work programme for 2008/09, which indicated that a report on the development of the Standards Committee website would be submitted to this meeting.
3. In recent years, the Council has undertaken a considerable amount of work to promote the national 'e-Government' agenda. This has led to a vast amount of information about Council activities being made publicly available on the website. Information is now far more accessible to citizens on a '24/7' basis, which has greatly enhanced the openness and transparency of the Council's decision making processes, services and systems.
4. The Council's official website [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) includes a page dedicated to the [Standards Committee](#). This gives an overview of the role and functions of the Committee and useful links to other related areas of the site, most notably:-

- [Committee Management Information System \(CMIS\)](#)

This system has been firmly established over a number of years. It includes information about the membership of the Standards Committee and its three Sub-Committees, including details of past and future meetings. The site provides for access to public agendas, minutes and reports, which can be downloaded. The system also contains a vast amount of information on the Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings, the system of democratic decision-making and the political governance arrangements operated by Dudley MBC. It also has links to individual Councillor web pages.

- [Complaints against Councillors and Co-opted Members](#)

This area of the site was established when the system for the local initial assessment of complaints was introduced from 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2008. The site gives information and guidance to potential complainants on the process to

be followed and allows complaints to be submitted electronically. The site includes links to relevant documentation, namely the complaint forms, information to potential complainants, the Standards Committee Assessment Criteria and the Members' Code of Conduct.

5. The content of the Standards Committee website is managed by the Democratic Services Team under the auspices of the Monitoring Officer. A brief demonstration and overview of the content of the website will be given at the meeting. Any suggestions from the Committee as to how the website could be enhanced or developed for the future are welcomed for further consideration by officers.

### **Finance**

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The content management of the web pages is undertaken by staff in Democratic Services as part of their normal duties.

### **Law**

7. The Standards Committee is established pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. Meetings of Committees are required to be made open to the public under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 unless the business being transacted falls within defined descriptions of exempt or confidential information.

### **Equality Impact**

8. The inclusion of information on the Internet is designed to make the work of the Standards Committee more accessible and transparent to all citizens, particularly in respect of those citizens who prefer to access information via the Internet or contact the Council using electronic methods of communication. The inclusion of information on the website promotes openness and accountability in the conduct of the Council's business.

### **Recommendation**

9. That the report and the practical demonstration of the content of the website be noted and the Committee be invited to comment and suggest any potential developments or improvements for the future.



.....  
**Philip Tart**  
**Monitoring Officer**

Contact Officers: Philip Tart / Steve Griffiths Telephone: 01384 (81)5300 / 5235  
Email: [philip.tart@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:philip.tart@dudley.gov.uk) [steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:steve.griffiths@dudley.gov.uk)

### **List of Background Papers**

Work Programme 2008/09 (Report to Standards Committee - 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2008)