

ANNEXE 3

Standards Review Comments

Cllr Robert Knowles	I am not sure if the £25 is set by us or in the regs? (for declaring hospitality) – This is very low now, a couple of sandwiches and a glass of wine at an event a member really does not want to go to soon gets over £25 – perhaps it should be increased
Cllr David Munro	<p>I have not been involved in drawing up Waverley's code but was at the heart of doing so for Surrey County Council. As the report says, the two codes are broadly similar.</p> <p>Unless there is evidence to the contrary which I haven't heard about, I don't believe that there have been any actual cases which have highlighted flaws in the code. I don't think therefore that a full review is worthwhile at this stage: wait until a 'real' case has passed through all stages and then use that as a benchmark on what went right and what went wrong.</p> <p>Just one small point though: the hospitality threshold of £25 above which it has to be declared is too low. Surrey has a threshold of £100 which is better.</p>
Cllr Diane James	<p>I participated in a Standards Panel as a member of the Standards Committee. This experience identified for me that the WBC code of conduct is somewhat 'unfit for purpose'.</p> <p>There are a number of specific points that I shall make borne out of my experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. panel members should not be contacted via representatives involved in a case.2. the panel chair should consult panel members throughout.3. adequate legal resource should be provided to panel members4. legal guidance should not be provided on a 'just in time' basis5. clarity as to why a panel needs to go into Exempt6. greater/improved clarity as to the remits of the SCC and WBC codes, overlap etc with a hierarchy of responsibility established7. greater support for the officer conducting the reports including training etc8. strict timelines as to how long cases can last, time between hearings etc9. WBC code should use examples to illustrate when breaches might/could have occurred - currently it is a lot of verbiage with little interpretation or guidance to help councillors10. there needs to be some mechanism to prevent any use of the code being used for personal vendetta purposes <p>Think that will do, as I am sure you will have guessed I have very little faith in the Code as it stands, how it has been interpreted and used to date.</p>