



Title: **Devon Wide Code**

Wards Affected: **All wards in Torbay**

To: **Standards Committee** On: **9 June 2011**

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1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 In light of the imminent abolition of the standards regime but the possibility of having a 'local' code of conduct discussions are ongoing with other local authorities within Devon to have a 'Devon wide' code.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Localism Bill contains provision for the scrapping of the current standards regime, including Standards for England. It does however provide that local authorities can still have a voluntary code and that if they have such a code they must adhere to it
- 2.2 Other local authorities in Devon have suggested having a code agreed between them to be adopted by all the local authorities in Devon. The benefits of this include:-
- officers from each authority are able to carry out investigations for other authorities as they will be familiar with the Devon wide code
 - the possibility of joint working between each authorities standards committee and possibly a joint 'Devon wide' standards committee in the future
 - consistency for 'dual hatted' members (i.e. those members who are members of more than one local authority)
- 2.3 No 'Devon wide' code has yet been agreed and discussions are still at an early stage. It is understood that AcSES (Association of County Secretaries and Solicitors) are due to produce a draft code as are the London Boroughs and it is likely that the Devon wide code will be based on one or both of these two models.

3. Proposals

3.1 Members are asked to provide any suggestions as to how they think the code of conduct should operate in the future so that these can be fed into future discussions. Comments would be particularly welcome on the following:-

- Do you agree with the principle of a 'Devon wide' code?
- Would you like to see a Standards Committee for the whole of Devon?
- Should the Council's Standards Committee continue to have independent members as well as councillors? If not, should all members be independent or councillors?
- The council will have no responsibility for Standards within Brixham Town Council anymore. Should Brixham Town Council be advised to adopt a local code and if so how should its standards committee be made up?
- What will be done if having adopted the code, councillors are not willing to abide to it?
- Is there any part of the current code of conduct that members would not wish to see in any voluntary code, whether regulatory or procedural?

Anthony Butler
Monitoring Officer