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# Update on Ethical Matters – Quarter 1 of 2016/17 - Summary Report

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Governance and Ethics Committee on 5 September 2016
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Rick Jones
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	
<b>Report Author:</b>	David Holling
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	GE3089

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on local and national issues relating to ethical standards and to bring to the attention of the Committee any complaints or other problems within West Berkshire.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of the Governance and Ethics Committee are asked to note the report.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** There are no financial issues arising from this report. All costs associated with the investigation of complaints are met from within existing budgets.
- 3.2 **Policy:** Revised policy and changes to processes adopted at Council in December 2013
- 3.3 **Personnel:** There are no personnel issues associated with this report
- 3.4 **Legal:** There are no legal issues arising from this report, The matters covered by this report are generally requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and regulations made under it.
- 3.5 **Risk Management:** The benefits of this process are the maintenance of the Council's credibility and good governance by a high standard of ethical behaviour. The threats are the loss of credibility of the Council if standards fall.
- 3.6 **Property:** None
- 3.7 **Other:** None

## 4. Other options considered

- 4.1 None

## 5. Executive Summary

## 6. Introduction

- 6.1 Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 it was agreed that quarterly reports would be provided to the Governance and Ethics Committee. This report sets out the number and nature of standards complaints received, progress made with complaints submitted and highlights any areas where training or other action might avoid further complaints in the future. It also sets out any progress made with changes to policies and procedures associated with the Code of Conduct.

## 7. Key Issues Identified in the report:

- 7.1 During Quarter 1 of 2016/17 no formal complaints were received by the Monitoring Officer.
- 7.2 No dispensations were granted during Quarter 1 of 2016/17.
- 7.3 A small number of gifts and hospitality have been declared by District Councillors during Quarter 1 of 2016/17.
- 7.4 A small Task Group of Members has been set up to review West Berkshire Council's Code of Conduct. The revised documentation will be considered as a separate item at this meeting.
- 7.5 Parish and Town Council's have submitted a number of Register of Interest Forms where they have elected a new Chairman or Vice-Chairman or co-opted new Parish Councillors.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The number of complaints at this stage remains low. Any issues identified will be included in the training being arranged for Town and Parish Councillors in October 2016.

## 9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 9.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment – **Not Required**
- 9.3 Appendix C – Gifts and Hospitality Register