

Harvey Patterson  
Corporate and Regulatory Services Manager  
Thanet District Council  
PO Box 9  
Cecil Street  
Margate  
CT19 1XZ

25 November 2013

Dear Harvey

### **Councillors' Code of Conduct**

Thank you for your letter to Sir Merrick Cockell of 29 July outlining your concerns with the current system of standards and the sanctions it offers. I apologise for the delay in responding, the reasons behind which I know you are aware of.

As you know, the LGA worked with the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to produce a model code of conduct in response to the new standards regime introduced in the Localism Act 2011. This involved consideration of the role of councils working with their members in the light of the changes included in the Act.

The LGA strongly believes that elected members should behave appropriately and respectfully to all colleagues – elected or otherwise - but that adequate sanctions do currently exist locally if an elected member does not do so. Alongside the ballot box, these include issuing formal letters, formal censure by motion, removal of the member from one or more Committees and adverse publicity.

The law clearly puts the responsibility for the new arrangements on elected members. We believe that councils are best placed to ensure high standards of behaviour of elected members through an effective local standards regime based on a locally agreed code of conduct and existing legislation.

The new standards regime was only fully introduced on 1 July 2012 and the Secretary of State, Eric Pickles, indicated in June 2012 that his Department would review the policy in three to five years' time. LGA lead members have been clear that this is not an issue that they would wish to take up with Government at the present time, although we will continue to collect and monitor the views of our member authorities.

Yours sincerely,



**Claire Holloway**  
**Head of Corporate Governance**