

## Standards Committee

### AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>STANDARDS BOARD UPDATE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 March 2008
<b>Directorate:</b>	Chief Executive's
<b>Ward(s)</b>	ALL

#### 1. Summary

The report provides an update on the current activities and advice from the Standards Board of England.

#### 2. Recommendations

That the report be noted.

#### 3. Report Background

3.1 The Standards Board Bulletins provide an update on news, guidance and advice for authorities together with statistics on referrals and investigations.

Bulletin 37 has just been published and is accordingly attached for the information of Members.

3.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Commencement No 2 and Savings) Order 2008 was made on 30 January 2008 to bring into force the provisions of the Standards framework.

3.3 Due to the move of the Ethical framework to the local domain the Standards Board recommend that local authorities publicise the new role of Standards Committees in order that the public know where to complain. To address this the Standards Board has prepared a template complaint form as part of a toolkit for local assessment. The form, however, will be a matter for local authorities. Authorities will also have to take a view as to whether any complaints regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with via the authorities' complaints system or not.

Clearly the new system will need careful consideration to ensure good practices are published and implemented.

The Standards Board will provide guidance in a loose-leaf binder to support authorities once the regulations are confirmed.

- 3.4 The Bulletin covers the role of Independent Members and Parish representatives reminding authorities of their important and essential role and that the Chair of the Committee requires an independent Chair, it also provides for methods of recruitment and the process to be adopted.
- 3.5 The local ethical framework means that the authority will be required to report information on the receipt of complaints and investigations to the Standards Board to enable them to monitor procedures in their role as strategic regulator. It is expected such information will be forwarded quarterly online.
- 3.6 There is an exemption regarding prejudicial interests under the Code of Conduct where the business relates to the functioning of setting the Council Tax or a precedent under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Bulletin discusses the scope of the exemption.
- 3.7 Where information is given to Members/Councillors about Appeals, good practice would be to provide a contact address for the President of the Adjudication Panel for England. There is a twenty one day notice period that has to be adhered to.
- 3.8 The new Chief Executive, Glenys Stacey, will succeed David Prince in May 2008.
- 3.9 The Referral and Investigation statistics remain reasonably stable comparing the statistics for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 January 2008 compared to the same period 2006/07.

#### **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

##### **4.1 Resources and Risk**

There will be significant financial and resource implications arising from the local ethical framework (Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) that have not yet been qualified.

##### **4.2 Legal**

There will be significant implications arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

#### **5. Background Papers**

Bulletin 37

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

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