

## Standards Committee

### AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT</b>
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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13 December 2010
<b>Directorate:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Following the resolution at the last Standards Committee for the Chair to draft a letter on behalf of this Standards Committee's members to several addressees including the Government about the Coalition Government's proposals to abolish the Standards Board Regime, the Chair has drafted a letter attached at appendix 1.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Standards Committee Members consider the contents of the draft letter with the Chair and make any amendments.

### 3. Report Background

- 3.1 The Coalition Government have announced they are to abolish the Standards Board regime as announced in the upcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill.
- 3.2 Detail on the proposals was contained in the Communities Minister Andrew Stunell's announcement on 20 September 2010, the Communities Secretary Eric Pickles' comments of the same date and a release from the Communities and Local Government Association.
- 3.3 Although Standards for England have released a statement that they intend to continue to work and support local authorities under the current regime whilst the statutory framework remains operative, the Coalition Government intends for the whole Standards regime to be axed in the upcoming Localism Bill. There has also been speculation in some quarters that Standards for England's scrutinizing role may be passed over to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 3.4 The Committee is referred to the minutes of the previous meeting for individual members' particular concerns, comments and remarks.

3.5 As is seen from the draft letter, the Chair proposes to write as both a constituent and Chairman of Northampton Borough Council's Standards Committee to explain these concerns, comments and remarks. Subject to any amendments the Committee members wish to make to the letter, it is intended the letter will be sent to ACSeS (Senior Solicitors group), Association of Local Councillors, Association of Parish Councillors, MP's Nick Clegg, Andrea Leadsom, Brian Binley and Michael Ellis and the Leaders of Northampton Borough Council.

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

##### 4.1 Resources and Risk

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance and those using the service and where such implications are material they have been described in the body of this report.

##### 4.2 Legal

None other than those mentioned in the body of the report. Standards Committee is the appropriate body to consider the matters set out in this report.

##### 4.3 Other Implications

4.3.1 This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service and where such implications are material; they have been described in the text of the report.

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

Advert and applications records held by the Borough Solicitor.

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