



Committee: STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date: THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2005
Venue: LANCASTER TOWN HALL
Time: 10.00 A.M.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declaration of Interests**
3. **Urgent Business**
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2005 (Copy attached)** (Pages 1 - 14)
5. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**
6. **4th Annual Assembly of Standards Committees**
Verbal Report of the Chairman.
7. **Code of Conduct Update**
Discussion led by the Chairman.
8. **Granting of Dispensations - Thurnham Parish Council** (Pages 15 - 16)
Report of the Corporate Director (Central Services).
9. **Standards Board Case Referrals** (Pages 17 - 28)
Report of the Corporate Director (Central Services).
10. **Parish Councils - Promotion of Standards**
Discussion led by the Chairman.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Stephen Lamley (Chairman), Keith Budden, Gina Dowding, Paul Gardner, Fiona Humphreys, Mr Tony James, David Kerr, Janie Kirkman, Roger Mace and Mrs Sue McIntyre

(ii) Substitute Membership

Councillors Susie Charles, Jean Dent and John Harrison

(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Jon Stark, Administration Services - telephone (01524) 582132 or email jstark@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies

Please contact Members' Secretary, telephone 582170, or alternatively email memberservices@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK CULLINAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
TOWN HALL,
LANCASTER LA1 1 PJ

Published on Wednesday 7th December 2005

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.00 A.M.

16TH JUNE 2005

PRESENT:- Stephen Lamley (Chairman), Tony James, Sue McIntyre, and Councillors Jean Dent (substitute for Councillor Keith Budden), Joe Ravetz and Roger Mace.

Officers in attendance:-

Roger Muckle	Corporate Director (Central Services)
Sarah Taylor	Head of Legal Services
Stephen Metcalfe	Senior Democratic Support Officer

Apologies: -

Councillors Keith Budden, Paul Gardner, David Kerr and Janie Kirkman and Fiona Humphreys.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed independent members, Mr Tony James and Sue McIntyre, to their first meeting of the Committee.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE – CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Mace and seconded by Councillor Dent: -

“That Councillor Ravetz be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year.”

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposition, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved:-

That Councillor Ravetz be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were made at this point.

4. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman advised that there were no items of Urgent Business. However, it was noted that Councillor Mace had advised of an issue that he wished to raise with regard to the Standards Board informing the Monitoring Officer and the Councillor concerned once an allegation had been made to the Board. It was noted that this matter could be considered as part of the report upon Standards Board Case Referrals 2005/06 (Minute 10 refers).

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 19th November 2004 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that enabled the Committee to consider a Standards Board Consultation Paper on a review of the Code of Conduct and determine whether Members wished to respond.

The purpose of the consultation was to review the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct and explore ways in which it could be simplified, clarified and improved. The Standards Board wished to use the consultation exercise as an opportunity to ask whether the Code of Conduct captured all the conduct it should and to focus on areas of the Code of Conduct which were contentious or may need clarification.

The Consultation Paper asked twenty nine questions, under ten separate headings. These headings were contained within the report, which summarised the salient points of the Consultation Paper.

Members considered each individual point of the Consultation Paper.

It was moved by Councillor Ravetz and seconded by Councillor Mace: -

“That the report be noted and that the Corporate Director (Central Services) be authorised to respond to the Consultation Paper as indicated by the Committee.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the report be noted and that the Corporate Director (Central Services) be authorised to respond to the Consultation Paper as indicated by the Committee, as set out in Appendix A to these Minutes.

7. REVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Corporate Director (Central Services) reported that, at its meeting on the 19th November 2004, the Committee had discussed the need to review regularly the City Council's various Protocols and requested that a report be submitted to its next meeting to enable it to review the Planning Protocol. A report on the Planning Protocol was accordingly submitted to the Committee.

The Head of Legal Services and the Head of Planning and Building Control had reviewed the existing Protocol, which was included in the City Council's Constitution. A suggested amended version of the Protocol was appended to the report for Members'

consideration. The “tracking” identified where changes had been made to the current version.

The review had taken account of good practice recommended by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS), guidance from the Standards Board for England and recent case law. In addition, the opportunity had been taken to include or expand on guidance on issues that had arisen or caused difficulties since the original document was drafted.

Members were asked to consider the amended version, and any other amendments that they might wish to make, with a view to recommending Council to adopt a revised version for inclusion in the Constitution.

It was moved by Councillor Ravetz and seconded by Councillor Mace: -

“That Council be recommended to adopt the revised version of the Planning Protocol, submitted as an Appendix to the report, for inclusion in the Constitution.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That Council be recommended to adopt the revised version of the Planning Protocol, submitted as an Appendix to the report, for inclusion in the Constitution.

8. INDEMNITIES REGULATIONS

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that advised the Committee of the content of new Regulations, which specified the circumstances in which councils may provide indemnities to members and officers.

It was recalled that, at the last meeting of the Committee on the 19th November 2004, it was reported that draft Regulations had been published dealing with the provision of indemnities for members and officers, and that a further report would be submitted once the Regulations had been made (Minute 22(ii) refers).

The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 had been made on the 22nd November 2004, and came into force on the following day. The Order gave local authorities (including parish councils) specific power to grant indemnities and/or take out insurance to cover the potential liability of members and officers in a wide range of circumstances. It was for each individual authority to decide whether to grant such indemnities, and whether to take out insurance cover. Details of the circumstance in which indemnities could now be provided were set out within the report, and Members’ attention was drawn in particular to the fact that an indemnity could now be granted to Members in respect of legal representation in Local Government Act 2000 Part 3 proceedings, that is in respect of any investigation, hearing or other proceedings for an alleged failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. Insurance cover could be purchased to cover the cost of such indemnities. It was noted that decisions on indemnities and insurance cover would be taken by Cabinet.

It was moved by Councillor Ravetz and seconded by Councillor Mace: -

“That the report be noted and that the Standards Committee be informed of Cabinet’s decision upon this matter.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the report be noted and that the Standards Committee be informed of Cabinet’s decision upon this matter.

9. GRANTING OF DISPENSATIONS

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that reminded the Committee of the provisions relating to the granting of dispensations, and asked the Committee to consider a number of applications that had been received and to consider future arrangements for the consideration of applications for dispensations.

Members were advised that, under the Code of Conduct, a member who had a prejudicial interest (that is, one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it was likely to prejudice the member’s judgment of the public interest), must withdraw from the meeting when the matter was being considered, must not exercise executive functions in relation to that matter, and must not seek improperly to influence a decision about the matter, unless the member had obtained a dispensation from this Committee.

The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) (Dispensations) Regulations 2002 set out the circumstances in which Standards Committees may grant dispensations.

The Regulations provide that dispensations may only be granted if: -

- half the members entitled or required to participate in the business of the authority would not otherwise be able to do so; or
- the authority would not be able to comply with the political balance principles.

Details of an application from Thurnham Parish Council, together with applications for dispensations from Members of the City Council’s Cabinet were set out within the report for Members’ consideration. The Committee was also asked to consider how it wished to consider requests for dispensations in the future and whether a sub-committee should be established for this purpose.

The request from Thurnham Parish Council was from five of the seven members of the Parish Council for a dispensation to participate in matters relating to Glasson Dock Bowling Club of which the five were members.

The request from the City Council’s Cabinet Members was to enable decisions to be made about indemnities. This issue would affect all Members and could not be considered without the granting of dispensations.

During the debate it was agreed that, rather than a sub-group being created, the Standards Committee would continue, for the time being, to consider requests for dispensations.

It was moved by Councillor Dent and seconded by Councillor Mace: -

“That the applications for dispensations for Councillors S. Bibby, M. Hornshaw, P. Quick, A. Stalker and M. Stalker of Thurnham Parish Council be granted until the next Parish Council election, subject to none of these members being either the Chair or the Treasurer of the Glasson Dock Bowling Club.”

It was then moved by Mr James and seconded by Mrs McIntyre: -

“That applications for dispensations from Members of the City Council’s Cabinet be granted until the date of the next City Council election to enable the Cabinet to consider the matter of indemnities.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

- (1) That the applications for dispensations for Councillors S. Bibby, M. Hornshaw, P. Quick, A. Stalker and M. Stalker of Thurnham Parish Council be granted until the next Parish Council election, subject to none of these members being either the Chair or the Treasurer of the Glasson Dock Bowling Club.
- (2) That applications for dispensations from Members of the City Council’s Cabinet be granted until the date of the next City Council election to enable the Cabinet to consider the matter of indemnities.
- (3) That requests for indemnities continue to be considered by the full Committee for the time being, but that this be reviewed if necessary if the workload becomes excessive.

10. STANDARDS BOARD CASE REFERRALS – 2005/06

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that updated the Committee on both the national and local position of the Standards Board workload.

The statistics of the Standards Board caseload for the first six months of the year were now available, and showed that a total of 306 cases had been referred to the Standards Board. There was an 8% decrease on the same period from last year.

An analysis of the allegations for 2005/06 was attached as Appendix A to the report.

50% of allegations received were in respect of parish Councils and 21% in respect of District Council’s. 62% of the allegations were from members of the public and 33% from Councillors.

An analysis of the nature of the allegations investigated showed that the most common areas for complaint concern were: -

- Prejudicial interest (22%);
- Failure to disclose personal interests (19%)
- Bringing the authority into disrepute (18%);
- Using position to confer or secure an advantage or disadvantage (16%).

Of those cases that had been investigated so far only 9%, or 28 cases, had been referred to the Adjudication Panel, 180 required no further action, there was no evidence of a breach in 61 cases, and only 37 had been referred back to the Monitoring Officer.

Locally, the Standards Board had received a total of 33 allegations of misconduct in respect of City and Parish Councillors. It was reported, at the meeting, that the Monitoring Officer had received details of a 34th case, which was not the subject of further investigation. Concern was expressed, at the meeting, that the Standards Board did not have a procedure in place to notify the Monitoring Officer and the Member concerned as soon as an allegation was received by the Standards Board. It was suggested, at the meeting, that the Council should have a Protocol whereby a Member making a complaint to the Standards Board about another Member would be required to notify the Monitoring Officer, who would then notify the Member about whom the complaint had been made.

It was moved by Councillor Ravetz and seconded by Councillor Mace: -

“That the report be noted and that appropriate wording for a Protocol be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the report be noted and that appropriate wording for a Protocol be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

11. FOURTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that sought the Committee's approval for Council representation at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees. It was reported that the Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees would be held at the ICC in Birmingham on 5th and 6th September 2005. Submitted as an appendix to the report was a copy of the programme for the Conference.

Members were advised that the delegate fee for the two-day Conference was £395 plus VAT and that one night's hotel accommodation would be required at a cost of £100 per person. Standard class rail fair for the return journey was approximately £70. It was reported that in previous years the Chairman and Monitoring Officer had attended and places had been provisionally booked for this year.

The Committee was asked to approve the attendance of the Chairman and Monitoring Officer at the Annual Assembly 2005.

It was moved by Mr James and seconded by Councillor Ravetz: -

“That the recommendations set out in the report be approved.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the Committee approves the attendance of the Chairman and the Monitoring Officer to the Fourth Annual Assembly held in Birmingham on 5th and 6th September 2005.

12. STANDARDS TRAINING FOR CUMBRIAN AUTHORITIES

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that informed the Committee of an invitation from South Lakeland District Council to attend a training opportunity for Officers and Committee Members in July 2005 and sought a decision on whether or not to accept the invitation.

Details of the training opportunity, costs involved and letter from South Lakeland District Council were provided for Members' consideration. It was noted arrangements regarding travel could be made as in previous years.

It was moved by Mrs McIntyre and seconded by Councillor Ravetz: -

- “(1) That the Committee accepts the invitation from South Lakeland District Council to attend the Standards training and the Corporate Governance and Probity training.
- (2) That all Members of the Committee and substitute Members be invited to attend the standards training and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and appropriate Officers attend the Corporate Governance and Probity Training.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

- (1) That the Committee accepts the invitation from South Lakeland District Council to attend the Standards training and the Corporate Governance and Probity training.
- (2) That all Members of the Committee and substitute Members be invited to attend the standards training and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and appropriate Officers attend the Corporate Governance and Probity Training.

13. BEHAVIOUR PROTOCOL

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that updated Members with the latest position of developing a behavioural protocol.

At its last meeting, the Committee had requested officers to draft a protocol that set out a minimum standard of behaviour that was expected of Members (minute 22(i)(1) refers).

Following the meeting, contact was made with a number of other local authorities and with the Standards Board to see if there are any examples of good practice in place elsewhere.

Whilst a number of local authorities had replied, the response had been disappointing and no examples of good practice had been identified. In addition, the matter was raised at the latest round of Standards Board Roadshow and no authority present had a behaviour protocol or something similar in place. In almost every instance, Councils relied on the good chairmanship of their member meetings to instil good manners and behaviour and when necessary, take the necessary actions that their procedural rules permitted.

As a consequence, it had not been possible for this meeting to draft a behavioural protocol based on best practice and Members' advice was sought on how to proceed.

After much debate it was agreed: -

"That the report and position be noted and that training for Chairmen be included within the City Council's Member Training Programme."

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the report and position be noted and that training for Chairmen be included within the City Council's Member Training Programme.

14. GOOD GOVERNANCE STANDARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

The Corporate Director (Central Services) submitted a report that sought the Committee's view upon whether it wished officers to research the implication of adopting the Good Governance Standard for Public Services.

It was reported that in order to promote good governance within all public service organisations, an Independent Commission had produced a Good Guidance Standard that local authorities were being recommended to adopt. The Standard had been developed as a guide to help everyone concerned with the governance of public service not only to understand and apply common principles, but also to assess the strengths and weaknesses of current practice and to make improvements.

The Standard was designed to supplement existing statutory and best practice codes and protocols. Where codes and guidance do not already exist, it was hoped that the Standard would provide assistance and direction. It was not, however, a statutory code but a guide to assist in public governance.

Attached, as an Appendix to the report, was a set of questions that authorities were asked to consider in assessing their compliance with the Standard. The Committee was, therefore, requested to consider if it wished officers to research compliance with the questions and to report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised that it should be noted that the Standard was not only concerned with good standards of behaviour and conduct, but concerned itself with the wider issues of corporate governance.

It was agreed: -

“That the Committee request officers to research the full implications of implementing the Good Governance Standards for Public Services and that a report be submitted to both the Standards and the Audit Committees.”

Upon being put to the vote Members voted in favour of the proposal, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved: -

That the Committee request officers to research the full implications of implementing the Good Governance Standards for Public Services and that a report be submitted to both the Standards and the Audit Committees.

.....
Chairman

(The meeting closed at 12.21 p.m.)

***Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Stephen Metcalfe, Senior Democratic Support Officer,
on 01524 582073, or alternatively e-mail
SMetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk***

APPENDIX A

RE: CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Council's Standards Committee has, at its meeting today, considered the Consultation Paper on the review of the Code of Conduct for Members, and would respond to the list of questions as follows:

1. Should the ten general principles be incorporated as a preamble to the Code of Conduct?

The City Council has already adopted a Preamble to the Code of Conduct, incorporating the ten general principles. However, it is felt that it should be for each individual Council to decide whether or not to adopt such a preamble, which should not form part of the Code itself. For your information, a copy of the City Council's Preamble is enclosed.

2. Are there any other principles which should be included in the Code of Conduct?

No.

3. Is it appropriate to have a broad test for disrespect or should we seek to have a more defined statement?

A broad test is adequate

4. Should the Code of Conduct include a specific provision on bullying? If so, is the ACAS definition of bullying appropriate for this?

It is not felt necessary to include a specific provision on bullying.

5. Should the Code of Conduct contain an explicit public interest defence for members who believe they have acted in the public interest by disclosing confidential information?

On the basis of the City Council's experience, it is felt that a public interest defence as defined here would not be appropriate.

6. Do you think the Code of Conduct should cover only information which is in law "exempt" or "confidential", to make it clear that it would not be a breach to disclose any information that an authority had withheld unlawfully?

No, it is not felt that it is necessary to make any amendment to the Code in this respect.

7. Should the provision related to disrepute be limited to activities undertaken in a member's official capacity or should it continue to apply to certain activities in a member's private life?

It is felt that the Code should remain as it is on this point.

- 8. If the latter, should it continue to be a broad provision or would you restrict it solely to criminal convictions and situations where criminal conduct has been acknowledged?**

It is felt that the Code should remain as it is on this point.

- 9. We believe that the Code should prohibit breaches of the publicity code, breaches of any local protocols, and misuse of resources for inappropriate political purposes. Do you agree?**

It is not felt that there is any need to amend the Code.

- 10. If so, how could we define “inappropriate political purposes”?**

Not necessary in the light of our response to question 9.

- 11. Is the Code of Conduct right not to distinguish between physical and electronic resources?**

Yes, it is agreed that there should be no distinction.

- 12. Should the provision of the Code of Conduct that requires members to report breaches of the Code by fellow members be retained in full, removed altogether or somehow narrowed?**

It is felt that the requirement on a member to report an alleged breach by another member should be removed from the Code, but that there should be added to the Code a note for the guidance of all concerned that any member who is aware of a material breach would, in the interests of good governance, and in the spirit of the ten general principles, be expected to report it.

- 13. If you believe the provision should be narrowed, how would you define it? For example, should it only apply to misconduct in a member’s public capacity, or only to significant breaches of the Code?**

Not applicable in the light of our answer to question 12.

- 14. Should there be a further provision about making false, malicious or politically motivated allegations?**

Following from our response to question 12, there should be a further note indicating that it would be inappropriate to make false, malicious or politically motivated allegations.

- 15. Does the Code of Conduct need to provide effective protection for complainants against intimidation, or do existing sections of the Code of Conduct and other current legislation already cover this area adequately?**

It is not felt that the Code needs to make specific provision for this.

- 16. Do you think the term “friend” requires further definition in the Code of Conduct?**

No.

- 17. Should the personal interest test be narrowed so that members do not have to declare interests shared by a substantial number of other inhabitants in an authority's area?**

No.

- 18. Should a new category of "public service interests" be created which is subject to different rules of conduct?**

No, this would unduly complicate the declaration of interests.

- 19. If so, do you think public service interests which are not prejudicial and which appear in the public register of interests should have to be declared at meetings?**

Not applicable

- 20. Do you think paragraph 10(2)(a-c) should be removed from the Code?**

No, but clarification of the current wording would be helpful to ensure a proper understanding of this clause of the Code.

- 21. Do you think less stringent rules should apply to prejudicial interests which arise through public service and membership of charities and lobby groups?**

No.

- 22. Should members with a prejudicial interest in a matter under discussion be allowed to address the meeting before withdrawing?**

It is felt that a member with a prejudicial interest should have no less right than he would as an ordinary member of the public.

- 23. Do you think members with prejudicial public service interests should be allowed to contribute to the debate before withdrawing from the vote?**

No, subject to our reply to question 22.

- 24. Should members employed in areas of sensitive employment, such as the security services, need to declare their occupation in the public register of interests?**

No, it should be possible to use a generic job description to cover this situation.

- 25. Should members be required to register membership of private clubs and organisations? If so, should it be limited to organisations within or near an authority's area?**

Yes.

- 26. Should the Code of Conduct require that the register of gifts and hospitality be made publicly available?**

Yes.

27. Should members also need to declare offers of gifts and hospitality that are declined?

No.

28. Should members need to declare a series of gifts from the same source, even if these gifts do not individually meet the threshold for declaration? How could we define this?

It is felt that gifts from the same source to the total value of £25 or more, over a three month period, should be declared.

29. Is £25 an appropriate threshold for the declaration of gifts and hospitality?

Yes.

I hope that these comments will be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. M. O.', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CENTRAL SERVICES)/MONITORING OFFICER

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Meeting of: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date: 15 December 2005

Report of: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CENTRAL SERVICES)

Reference: CDCS/HLS

Title: GRANTING OF DISPENSATIONS – THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC/EXEMPT ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update the Committee regarding the requests for dispensations received from five members of the Thurnham Parish Council and considered at the Committee's last meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note that Councillors A. Stalker and M. Stalker of Thurnham Parish Council do not wish to proceed with their requests for dispensations.

REPORT

Members will recall that at the last meeting of the Committee on the 16th June 2005, it was reported that requests had been received from Councillors S. Bibby, M. Hornshaw, P.Quick, A. Stalker and M. Stalker of Thurnham Parish Council for dispensations to participate in matters relating to Glasson Dock Bowling Club of which they were all members.

It was reported that Thurnham Parish Council had seven members, and accordingly the five members who had applied for dispensations constituted more than 50% of those who would be entitled to participate in the business of the parish council. If dispensations were not granted, it would be impossible for the Council to consider issues relating to the Bowling Club.

The Committee granted the dispensations for the period to the next parish council election, but only on the basis that none of the five Councillors was the Chairman or the Treasurer of the Glasson Dock Bowling Club.

Following the meeting, the Clerk to the Parish Council confirmed that Mr. A Stalker is the Chairman of the Bowling Club, and Mrs. M. Stalker the Treasurer. The other three councillors from whom requests had been received are all ordinary members of the Club. The Clerk indicated that as the quorum for the Parish Council is three, the dispensations granted to the three ordinary members of the Club are sufficient for the Parish Council to conduct its business satisfactorily.

Accordingly, it is not necessary for the Standards Committee to consider further the requests from Mr. and Mrs. Stalker.

The granting of the dispensations to Councillors Bibby, Hornshaw and Quick have been noted on the Register of Interests held by the City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

There are no financial implications from this report, and the Section 151 officer has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer have no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

STANDARDS BOARD CASE REFERRALS 2005/06

15 December 2005

Report of Corporate Director (Central Services)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on both the national and local position of the Standards Board workload.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted and the Committee consider if any action is required.

REPORT

1 NATIONAL POSITION

- 1.1 In 2005/06, the total number of allegations received by the Standards Board up to the end of October was 2,427.
- 1.2 The statistics show that, 64% of these were received from members of the public and 29% from fellow councillors. 41% of the allegations received were in respect of Parish Councils and 25% in respect of District Councils.
- 1.3 Of the allegations received, a total of 655 cases (27%) have been referred for investigation.

An analysis of the nature of the allegations investigated shows that the most common areas for complaint concern –

Prejudicial interest (23%)
 Bringing authority into disrepute (23%)
 Failure to treat others with respect (14%)
 Failure to disclose personal interests (13%)
 Using position to confer or secure an advantage or disadvantage (13%)

- 1.4 Of these cases, 56% are in respect of Parish Councils and 21% in respect of District councils.

- 1.5 To date, 253 cases have been referred to Monitoring Officers to investigate however, the statistics show that in recent months, over half of all cases referred for investigation have been referred back locally to Monitoring Officers. Of those referred to date, 74 have been completed and 51 of these have been determined by local standards committees. In 28 of these, the Standards Committee decided that the member had not breached the code. In the remaining 23 cases, the following outcomes were determined :-
- 12 members were censured
 - 1 was suspended for 1 month
 - 1 was suspended for 3 months
 - 3 were required to make an apology and undergo appropriate training
 - 6 had no sanction imposed
- 1.6 Overall, of those cases investigated so far, either by an Ethical Standards Officer or locally by a Monitoring Officer, 59% were concluded as requiring no further action, 16% no evidence of a breach, 10% referred to Monitoring Officers, and 15% referred to the Adjudication Panel.
- 1.7 Of the 309 cases referred to the Adjudication Panel, 267 have now been determined. Of those determined, 30% were found to have brought the authority into disrepute, 15% had failed to declare a prejudicial interest and 12% had failed to treat others with respect. The sanctions imposed had resulted in the disqualification of 167 councillors for periods ranging from 2 months to 5 years, and a further 49 suspensions ranging from 5 days to 1 year.
- 1.8 The Standards Board provides regular bulletins that not only give the latest position on their statistics, but also a general update of current standards issues. In particular, the Board issue 3 publications namely :-
- Standards Committee News
 - Standards Board Bulletin
 - Town and Parish Standards

All three are targeted at different audiences and are available on the Standards Board website. For illustration and information, the latest copy of the Standards Committee News (No 4) is attached.

2 LOCAL POSITION

2.1 Locally, I can confirm that the Standards Board have received a total of 45 allegations of misconduct in respect of City and Parish Councillors. A summary of the position is set out below.

	City	Parish
Allegations Received	35	11
Proceed to Investigation	26	8
Resolved to Date	22	6
- No breach	15	--
- Breach but No Action Required	6	6
- Breach Referred to Adjudication Panel	1	--

2.2 Currently there are 6 cases being investigated; 4 by Ethical Standards Officers in respect of City Councillors, and 2 by the Monitoring Officer in respect of Parish Councillors. On completion of his investigations, the Monitoring Officer will report to the Committee. In cases where the report identifies evidence to support a breach, the Committee will be required to undertake a hearing. It is anticipated that the Monitoring Officer will have completed his investigations early in the new year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
There are no financial implications of this report.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Legal Services have been consulted and have no comments to add.	
DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
The Deputy Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer: Roger Muckle
None.	Telephone: 01524 582022
	E-mail: rmuckle@lancaster.gov.uk

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You have probably been wondering what happened to *Standards Committee News* — this is, after all, our first issue for nearly a year. It has been a very busy time for us, reviewing and consulting on the Code of Conduct, embedding local investigations, and speeding up our referrals and investigations, not to mention organising the Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees. We have also been scrutinised by two influential public bodies and await the government's response to their recommendations. You can read more about this work over the following pages, and we will write to all standards committee chairs detailing the government's official response to these issues in the near future.

In the meantime, we have been talking to standards committees and looking again at our newsletters to make sure they meet your needs. In future, we will produce two issues of *Standards Committee News* a year, in May and November, and we will be encouraging you to help shape them by submitting ideas and feedback. Our contact details are on the last page.

We believe standards committees have a critical role to play in improving standards of behaviour and increasing public trust and confidence, and I look forward to supporting you in your important work over the coming months and years. I also encourage you to send in any ideas for future articles in this newsletter — any examples of good practice and hot topics for discussion are welcome, and will help to keep this newsletter relevant to your needs.

[David Prince, chief executive](#)

[Government considers committee findings](#)

The government is considering its response to recommendations from two influential committees which scrutinised the role and effectiveness of The Standards Board for England last year. The Committee on Standards in Public Life and the parliamentary select committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister both presented their findings to the government earlier this year. Local government minister Phil Woolas MP told the Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, meeting in Birmingham this September, that he intends to reach a decision in the next few months.

A strategic approach

The report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, chaired by Sir Alistair Graham, called for more independent members on standards committees — a view we fully agree with. It also called for The Standards Board for England to take on a more strategic role in regulating ethical standards in local government, and with local investigations now in place, we are already moving in this direction.

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...and more!

Contents

The Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, reporting a few months later, congratulated the Standards Board on the progress made in speeding up investigations and put past delays down to the absence of local investigations regulations. Recognising that we have often been criticised for these delays, the committee remarked that it was unreasonable to have expected us to function well within an incomplete statutory framework and without the necessary resources and powers.

Both reports also suggested improvements to the Code of Conduct which were reflected in our consultation on the review of the Code.

Considering complaints

The one issue on which the two committees disagreed was the question of who should consider complaints.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life proposed a local filter, where complaints would be received and assessed by each local authority. It believes this will enable greater local ownership of the process and discourage politically-motivated complaints. But the committee stressed that standards committees would need a majority of independent members and independent chairs if they were to maintain public confidence in the system, and this would require primary legislation.

Conversely, the Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister endorsed the current arrangements with The Standards Board for England as a central filter for complaints. According to the report, "central initial assessment of complaints by experienced officers applying a consistent set of criteria is one of its [the system's] unique strengths". The committee stated that it does not believe a local filtering system would enhance consistency in the process or increase efficiency.

The question of who should filter complaints is therefore clearly a key issue for ministers as they consider the way

forward. They will have to take into account a number of questions of both principle — will it lead to enhanced public confidence and greater responsibility for standards at a local level? — and practicality — will it be more cost-effective and efficient than at present and reduce politically-motivated complaints?

We look forward to their response and will keep you informed.

Resolving disputes through mediation

Councillors with disputes can be instructed by standards committees to undertake mediation and conciliation as part of a sanction, and ethical standards officers can make similar directions to be implemented by monitoring officers in specific cases. Mediation and conciliation may also be useful in resolving situations that have not yet given rise to complaints to The Standards Board for England. Some monitoring officers and standards committees already have mediation skills, but it may be useful for others to know how to acquire mediation skills and access third-party services.

That's where Mediation UK comes in. Mediation UK is a national voluntary organisation dedicated to developing constructive means of resolving conflicts in communities. It provides information on free and subsidised community mediation services throughout the UK, including training services for those who wish to provide mediation services themselves.

Authorities without specific mediation expertise may find these services useful. For more information and resources on mediation, visit the organisation's website at:

www.mediationuk.org.uk

We are not able to endorse any particular mediation training providers.

Local investigations statistics

Ethical standards officers had referred 253 cases to monitoring officers for local investigation as of the end of September 2005 — equivalent to 32% of all cases referred for investigation since local referrals began in November 2004. In recent months, over half of all cases have been referred locally, and this trend looks set to continue.

74 reports have already been received from monitoring officers, and there have been 51 standards committee decisions on cases investigated locally. In

28 of those cases, it was decided that the member had not breached the Code of Conduct. In the other 23 cases:

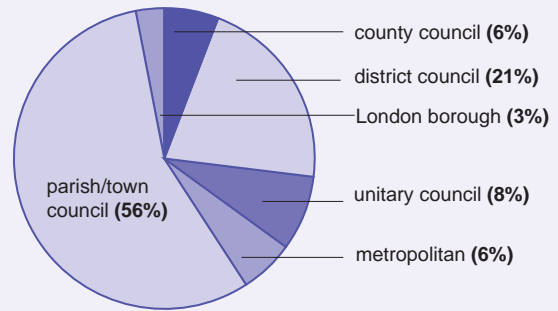
- 12 members were censured;
- 1 was suspended for 1 month;
- 1 was suspended for 3 months;
- 3 were required to make an apology and undergo appropriate training;
- 6 had no sanction imposed.

Latest referral statistics

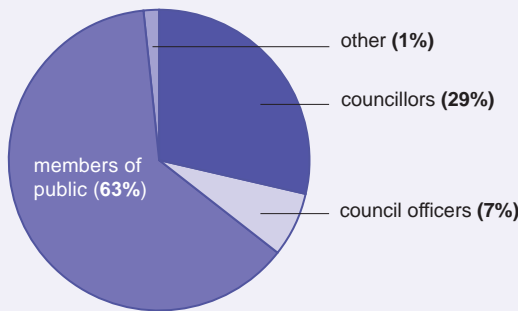
The Standards Board for England received 1931 allegations between 1 April and 30 September 2005 (the latest figure for the current financial year). The following charts show the breakdown for those allegations as they progressed through evaluation and investigation.

These figures are also available from our website, along with final figures for the previous financial years. The current statistics are updated monthly. To view them, go to: www.standardsboard.co.uk/casestatics/

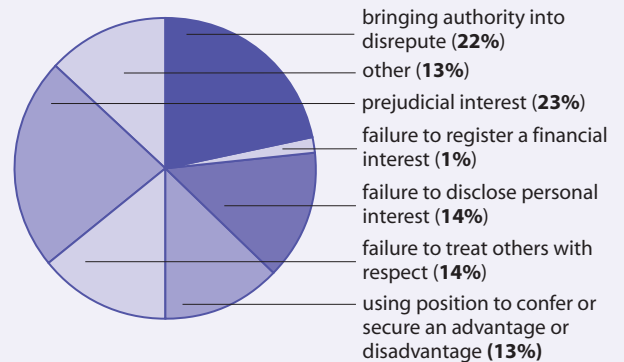
Authority of subject member in allegations referred for investigation



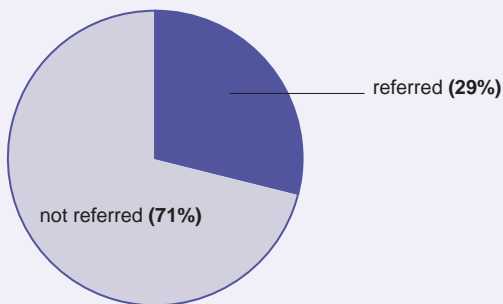
Source of allegations received



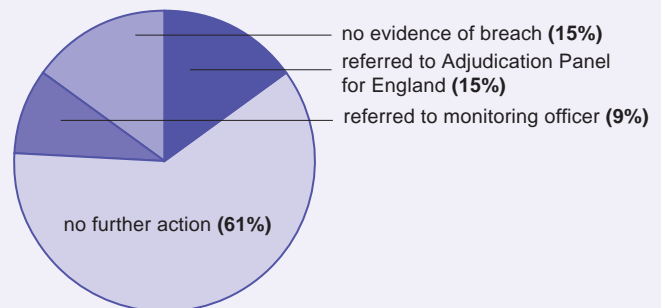
Nature of allegations referred for investigation



Allegations referred for investigation



Final findings



Key issues emerge as Code consultation closes

The Standards Board for England has presented Phil Woolas MP, the local government minister, with a series of recommendations for changes to the Code of Conduct, following our review of the Code earlier this year. We want to see a clearer Code which enables members to fully represent their communities without undue hindrance or red tape, while maintaining a commitment to the highest principles of public service.

The recommendations are the result of a four-month consultation exercise on the future of the Code of Conduct in which we asked members how they thought the Code could be improved. Over 1,200 individuals,

authorities and other organisations responded in writing, and we consulted nearly 1,000 additional members and officers during our series of regional roadshows held across the country.

We found wide support for a simpler Code, one that local government can take ownership of and adopt. These are the key changes we want to see made:

- The Code of Conduct should be simpler, more enabling, and owned by the members it applies to.
- The Code needs to empower members as community advocates, taking the lead on issues where their expertise is greatest and speaking out on behalf of their communities.

- The rules around personal and prejudicial interests should be clearer, especially for members who sit on more than one public body.
- Members must be able to disclose information when it is in the public interest. The Code needs to be clear on what information should be confidential.
- Members are entitled to private lives. The public only expects private behaviour to be regulated when it seriously damages the reputation of local government.
- Members have a right to challenge poor performance and criticise officers fairly, but bullying cannot be tolerated and needs to be addressed more explicitly in the Code.
- The current duty for members to report breaches is unnecessary and unhelpful, and should be removed.
- The Code should protect complainants and witnesses from intimidation.

The government is now considering its response and we expect a decision on possible revisions to the Code of Conduct later in the year, alongside any proposals arising from the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (see Government considers committee findings on page 1).

Our full recommendations, along with an independent analysis of consultation responses by Teesside Business School, are available from our website at:

www.standardsboard.co.uk/codereview/

Co-ordinators push for more member forums

Co-ordinators of independent members' forums discussed the possibility of setting up a national forum of independent members at their annual meeting in July. But after a lively debate, it was decided that this was a bit premature, as not all areas of the country are covered by forums yet. The gaps are in the area north of Yorkshire, a large part of the Midlands and Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Essex.

The co-ordinators agreed instead to encourage as many people as possible to attend a fringe event for independent members at the Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, where they could learn about the benefits of joining forums and hear about members' experiences of setting them up. The fringe event was a rare chance for independent members from all over the country to get together and share experiences and ideas and, judging from the high attendance, was a welcome event.

The session focused on the benefits of independent members' forums, which are growing in popularity and strength across the country. The session heard first hand accounts of how existing forums had galvanized members to approach their authorities for things which were available to members in other authorities but not to them. It was clearly shown that the encouragement and support of forums can make a big difference to

independent members who, in some authorities, may feel isolated or marginalised.

About half the independent members at the conference attended the lively event and a number of members registered their interest in forming new groups. Anne Rehill, senior policy adviser at The Standards Board for England, is helping to facilitate the drive for forums and will put members who are interested in setting one up in touch with other members from the same area. If you are in one of the areas where there is no forum and you would like to set one up, you can contact Anne on 020 7378 5030, or e-mail: anne.rehill@standardsboard.co.uk.

The existing co-ordinators are also happy to be contacted if you would like to talk to them about setting up a forum in your area. They are also willing to attend meetings if you would find that helpful.

- Mr Richard Stephens (Gloucestershire)
e-mail: rstephens@dialogueuk.com
- Mr Andrew May (south west)
e-mail: andrewandsuemay@witterings.fsworld.co.uk
- Mr Mike Wilkinson (West Yorkshire and Humberside)
e-mail: mike.wilkinson100@ntlworld.com
- Mr Graham Wood (Greater Manchester)
telephone: 0161 295 3646
e-mail: gwoodatno1@aol.com
- Mr Bruce Claxton (south of England)
e-mail: bandjclaxton@btinternet.com
- Ms Sarah Lawrence (Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire)
telephone: 01793 463603
e-mail: slawrence@swindon.gov.uk
- Mr Ray Haines (Kent)
e-mail: ray@doverchamber.co.uk
- Father Jim Kennedy (London)
e-mail: blesac@rcdow.org.uk

Upcoming meetings

The next meeting of the **London independent members' forum** will be on 28 December at 1pm (venue to be confirmed). If you are interested in attending and would like more information, please contact the forum co-ordinator, Jim Kennedy. Details above.

The next meeting of the **south of England independent members' forum** will be held at the Wealden District Council offices, Crowborough, East Sussex, on 3 April 2006.

If you are interested in attending and would like more information, contact the forum co-ordinator, Bruce Claxton. Details above.

Sharing terms of reference

The co-ordinators also emphasised the importance of sharing information, particularly around extended terms of reference for standards committees — an area where The Standards Board for England can help. Standards committees are required to provide their terms of reference to us and should forward a new copy every time they change. We will then be able to share information more widely about what terms of reference standards committees have.

We are also interested in hearing about your experiences of being on a standards committee, particularly if you have been involved in a local investigation or hearing, have any special responsibilities, or have been innovative in your approach to the statutory functions of training and promoting the Code of Conduct.

Please send any ideas or information to James Harrigan at james.harrigan@standardsboard.co.uk.

Survey sets benchmark for public confidence

Research by MORI into the public's perceptions of ethics in local government has found that most people have a higher opinion of local councillors than politicians generally, but trust is still low. And while most people have never complained about a councillor, one in ten has wanted to.

The Standards Board for England commissioned MORI to investigate the public's perceptions of ethics and attitudes towards local government. The research will help us to establish benchmarks against which we can monitor the success of our work in increasing public confidence in local democracy.

Initial findings

MORI asked over 1,000 members of the public about their views on local government. It found a mismatch between what people regard as important roles for councillors and the perception of what councillors actually do. For example, 54% of those surveyed think it is important for councillors to make sure that public money is spent wisely, but only 21% think most or all councillors in their area do so. 39% think councillors should fulfil election promises, but only 15% think most or all councillors do.

The survey found that people are interested in local issues and want to engage with their local area but are not always certain what they can do in practice. It also revealed a lack of understanding about the work of councillors and low levels of contact with elected members — only one in seven people have met a local councillor within the last six months.

If people ever do need to complain, they are most likely to want an independent body to deal with it (46%), compared with their local council (28%) or an MP (13%). The three most important factors when making a complaint are knowing that it will be dealt with thoroughly, that the investigation will be independent, and that you will be kept informed.

The full report will be available on our website in the near future.

Three-month limit on hearings explained

A case heard in the High Court regarding a local determination by the standards committee of Bolsover District Council established the principle that authorities need to make every effort to hold a hearing within three months of receiving the case from an ethical standards officer. But just how rigid is this limit, and are there any exceptions to the rule?

Paragraph 6(2)(b) of the *Local Authorities (Code of Conduct)(Local Determination) Regulations 2003* states that a hearing must be held within three months of the reference from the ethical standards officer. Authorities are encouraged to ensure that hearings are held as soon as possible and within this time limit imposed by legislation. The standards committee has the power to delay the hearing if something unexpected or unforeseen occurs which prevents it from meeting the time limit, but the court made it clear these must be genuine reasons — it is not sufficient that a subject member may have no objections to the hearing being held outside the three-month period.

Unexpected or unforeseen circumstances may include the following events, although it is by no means an exhaustive list:

- illness of the subject member or any of the standards committee members;
- bereavement suffered by the subject member or any of the standards committee members;
- other important engagements which cannot be altered, such as hospital appointments and jury service;
- the subject member being called to work out of the country for a long period of time.

Tackling parish problems at the root

A parish council with evidence of longstanding personal conflict and communication problems was given mediation and training support by its principal authority as a result of directions issued for the first time by The Standards Board for England.

The Standards Board for England issued the directions using powers that came into force as part of the local investigations regulations last year. The regulations enable ethical standards officers to direct monitoring officers to take action other than investigation to resolve local problems, such as reviewing procedures to make them more robust or, as in this case, getting councillors to sit down and work out their problems together.

Since this first direction was issued, ethical standards officers have used these powers in several further cases, and a number of other directions are expected to be issued in the near future.

Underlying problems

Some allegations reveal longstanding problems or more deeply ingrained issues within an authority which investigations alone are not able to address. There may be any number of underlying factors affecting the authority, such as:

- factionalism on the council, often resulting from a split over a controversial decision — possibly the clerk may even be thought to have taken sides;
- a dominant or destructive personality on the council antagonising other members;
- bullying of members or the clerk by other members;
- a lack of understanding by members of what is and is not acceptable behaviour;
- a lack of procedures in council, such as standing orders or procedures for dealing with disruptive behaviour;
- poor chairing skills, which can allow meetings to get out of control;
- poor resourcing and a lack of support for the clerk, who may be unable to ensure business is run correctly.

The directions power is an important tool because it allows us to tackle these problems at the root and make a lasting difference to the way an authority is run.

Beyond investigations

In this instance, 76 allegations had been received about council members since April 2002, suggesting a history of conflict and communication problems. A number of these allegations were investigated, but it became apparent that the investigations were unable to resolve the underlying problems.

The ethical standards officer directed the monitoring officer of Mendip District Council to arrange mediation between the members and organise training and guidance on conflict resolution and parish council procedure. The monitoring officer had to report back to The Standards Board for England within three months, setting out progress on both aspects of the direction.

Vivienne Pay, the monitoring officer of Mendip District Council, is happy to be contacted with any questions or for further information on this matter. Please telephone 01749 341538 or e-mail payv@mendip.gov.uk.

Supporting your parishes

Directions are not the only way we are working to address issues of this kind. At a national level, we are working with bodies such as the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks to develop support packages, and we are seeking funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to support some of the work.

Standards committees too have a role to play. Sometimes standards committees seem reluctant to support parishes in their area with these kinds of problems, but standards committees have a responsibility to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among members. We often find that independent members, in particular, can play an important role in working through some of the difficulties with parishes as they are seen as not having the political baggage that elected members may have.

If you think there may be issues with a particular parish in your area, we would urge you to talk to your local county association and the local branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks about how to work collectively with the parishes to address these problems and help them move forward to the benefit of all in the local community. You may also be interested in the article on providing mediation and conciliation support to members.

If any committees out there have stories of success in supporting a parish facing such difficulties, please tell us about it so we can share effective practice with other standards committees and see if there is anything we can try to replicate at a national level. Send your stories to James Harrigan at james.harrigan@standardsboard.co.uk.

Please also state if you would be happy for us to use your experience as a case study in future editions of the newsletter.

Toolkit helps authorities assess standards

Tools to help authorities take their ethical temperature and develop good ethical governance are being jointly developed by The Standards Board for England, the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

The ethical governance toolkit provides diagnostic tools to help authorities strengthen their ethical governance arrangements. Authorities can choose from a range of options, recognising that councils differ in their needs and approaches to ethical governance issues.

There are four key elements to the toolkit, administered by the Audit Commission, the IDeA, or jointly by both organisations:

1. A self-assessment questionnaire for elected members and senior officers, designed to assess an authority's awareness of ethical issues.
2. A full audit, investigating all areas of an authority's arrangements in depth and assessing:
 - compliance with the Code of Conduct;
 - arrangements for local determinations and investigations;
 - the roles and responsibilities of standards committees;
 - the roles and responsibilities of monitoring officers;
 - the roles and responsibilities of chief executives;
 - protocols and constitution;
 - arrangements for promoting confidence in local democracy;
 - understanding and behaviours.
3. A light-touch health check, investigating the same areas covered by the full audit (listed above) but in less detail
4. Developmental workshops with officers and members tailored to the specific needs of the authority.

The first two services are available now and the other parts will be available in the new year.

For more information on the toolkit, visit the IDeA's website at:

www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=1115850

Case summary policy reviewed

Summaries of cases where ethical standards officers consider there is no evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct will be taken down off the website after only six months, following a recent review of the policy by the Board. Previously, these cases remained up for two years.

The policy for all other cases remains the same — the summaries remain on the site for two years from either the closure of the case or, for cases referred to The Adjudication Panel for England or local standards committee, from the hearing date or completion of any sanction, such as a suspension or disqualification.

Ethics in local authorities explored

The Standards Board for England has commissioned a team at the University of Manchester to conduct research into what components contribute to an ethical local authority. The research will draw on good practice both nationally and internationally and, importantly, upon your experiences as practitioners in local authorities.

The tenth report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of embedding the principles of public life in public organisations. This research project looks at how this

goal might be achieved. A number of factors will be investigated, including mediation, communication and training, the development of protocols, the role of standards committees, the importance of leadership, and the role of ethics in corporate governance.

The first stage of the project, which was recently completed, was to undertake a literature review, in order to develop a model of the components that make up an ethical environment and how these components relate to each other. The model will then be tested and developed further via case studies, in the context of the challenges regularly faced by local public bodies today.

More information on this project can be found at the following website, which has been set up by the research team:

www.ipeg.org.uk/Standards.htm

The research will be completed in December 2005, and we will publish a summary of the findings on our website.

Help with local investigations and hearings

A DVD promoting best practice in local investigations and hearings is in the final stages of production.

The DVD, *Going local: investigations and hearings*, follows the fictional case of Councillor Jones, who has been accused of failing to declare an interest in a planning meeting considering an application submitted by his nephew. Viewers follow the drama as it develops, from the initial referral of the complaint through to the standards committee hearing. Learning points and commentary punctuating the film address some of the common areas of difficulty and our recommended solutions. It also includes a section on the importance of local ownership of the Code of Conduct and our role in supporting its implementation.

We hope to complete the DVD soon and should be in a position to distribute it by the end of this month. In the meantime, you may find some of our other guidance for standards committees of use — see *Information for new members* on page 8 for more information

Board changes

Professor Alan Doig and John Bowers have ended their terms of office as Board members with The Standards Board for England. Both have served since the organisation's formation in 2001. They contributed to our development during the difficult early years when we were dealing with untried and incomplete legislation, and have overseen the improvements in our performance in more recent times. Their expertise and considered contributions will be sorely missed.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which is responsible for board member appointments, has advertised the vacancies and we will let you know about their replacements as soon as they are announced.

As a result of the local elections in May, there are undoubtedly many new members of standards committees across the country. So, as an introduction to the new faces — and a reminder to the more established ones — here is a brief guide to the information available from our website, including publications aimed specifically at members of standards committees. Some of this information is also available in hard copy. For more information, please call 0845 078 8181 or write to publications@standardsboard.co.uk.

Guidance

- **Guidance on standards committees**

A guide to the role and make-up of standards committees.

- **Standards committee determinations**

Information for standards committees on how to hold a local determination hearing.

www.standardsboard.co.uk/localauthorityguidance/

Standards Committee News

The latest issue and past issues of the newsletter. You can also sign up to receive issues by e-mail or cancel your subscription here.

www.standardsboard.co.uk/scnews/

FAQs

Frequently asked questions about the Code of Conduct, including a section on standards committees.

www.standardsboard.co.uk/faqs/

Case summaries

Summaries of recent investigations and hearings. The browse function enables you to find cases referred to standards committees — use the 'SBE outcome' box and select 'referred to the local standards committee'.

www.standardsboard.co.uk/cases/

Other publications

An extensive list of all our publications.

www.standardsboard.co.uk/publications/

Contacts

If you received this edition of Standard Committee News from a colleague but would like your own copies in future, write to scnews@standardsboard.co.uk or go to:

www.standardsboard.co.uk/scnews/

If you have any comments or questions about Standards Committee News or ideas for future items, drop us a line at scnews@standardsboard.co.uk.

For all other enquiries, telephone 0845 078 8181 or e-mail enquiries@standardsboard.co.uk.