



Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 12th July 2007

Subject: Standards Board for England - Bulletin 33

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Committee of the latest Standards Board Bulletin published in May 2007.
2. The Bulletin is a summary of news and guidance on the code of conduct issued by the Standards Board. The highlights of this issue are outlined from paragraph 3.1. The full Bulletin is attached at Appendix 1.
3. Distributing the Bulletin has positive implications for Corporate Governance, as it ensures that all Members of the Council, Parish Council Members and key officers are kept up to date with standards issues and guidance on the code of conduct.
4. Members of the Committee are asked to note the report and the attached Bulletin.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Committee of the latest Standards Board Bulletin published in May 2007.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Bulletin is a summary of news and guidance for officers and Members, providing the latest news, features and guidance on the Code of Conduct and the work of The Standards Board for England. It is published every two months on the Standards Board for England website.
- 2.2 The Bulletin is issued to all Members and voting co-opted Members of Council, parish clerks (via the Standards Committee agenda) and key officers within the authority. Past issues are available at:
www.standardsboard.co.uk/Publications/TheBulletin/

3.0 Main Issues

Highlights from this issue are detailed below.

Information about the new Code of Conduct

- 3.1 The Bulletin provides a short summary of the changes to the model Code of Conduct, including the rules surrounding interests and gifts and hospitality, and also provides advice as to how to adopt the Code and advertise its adoption. Finally, there is an article on page 4 of the Bulletin which provides special advice to Parish and Town Councils as to whether they should adopt paragraph 12(2) of the Code or not.

Details of the Standards Board for England Annual Assembly

- 3.2 The Bulletin provides an overview of the type of sessions delegates can expect at the Assembly, including sessions addressing the wider impact of the local filter and the revised Code. These will include training and hands-on workshops to help delegates focus on raising their authorities' standards to an even higher level. An advanced copy of the conference programme is available at
www.annualassembly.co.uk/programme/

Local investigations – update

- 3.3 The Bulletin reports that there has been positive feedback to some changes to the criteria for referring complaints for local investigation. The Standards Board now retain investigations that would warrant a penalty from the Adjudication Panel, they assess allegations against executive members on a case-by-case basis and do not automatically retain these cases, and finally although they do not always retain cases where the monitoring officer has a conflict of interest, Ethical Standards Officers can use their discretion in relation to smaller authorities.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 The distribution of the Standards Board for England Bulletin is part of the Corporate Governance Communication Plan.

4.2 Distributing the Bulletin has positive implications for Corporate Governance, as it ensures that all Members of the Council, Parish Council Members and key officers are kept up to date with standards issues and guidance on the code of conduct.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 There are no legal or resource implications to this report.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The Bulletin is a summary of news and guidance for officers and Members, providing the latest news, features and guidance on the Code of Conduct published every two months.

6.2 The highlights in the Bulletin are detailed at paragraph 3.1 and the full Bulletin is attached at Appendix 1.

6.3 Distributing the Bulletin to all Members of the Council, Parish Councils and key officers contributes positively to the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements by ensuring they are kept up to date with standards issues and guidance on the code of conduct.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the contents of the report and the attached Bulletin.