

**Report of the Chief Executive to the Chair and Members
Of the Standards Committee
2nd June 2011**

Executive & Presenting Officer: Kath Allaway, Monitoring Officer

Status: For Agreement

The Future of Standards in Local Government

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Coalition Government's proposals for the future of standards in local government and the abolition of the Standards Board regime.

2. Recommendations

That Members

- 2.1 Note the report and request that future reports, information and training be given when the position is clarified.

3. Reasons

- 3.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (s54), the Police Authority established a Standards Committee. This was revised in 2010 and includes six Independent Members of Standards Committee and six Members of the Police Authority.

- 3.2 The Standards Board for England (Standards for England), also introduced in the Local Government Act 2000, is responsible for giving Standards Committees and Members support and guidance on the Code of Conduct and how to deal with complaints about Members' conduct; monitoring and publishing information on how local authorities perform in the local assessment of complaints and how they are dealt with; removing the power of Standards Committees to receive complaints

against their Members, where necessary, and investigating the most serious cases when referred by Standards Committees.

The Coalition Government have indicated that changes will take place in how Standards in Local Government will be dealt with and that the Standards for England regime will be abolished

4. Proposals for the future of Standards in Local Government

The Coalition Government intends to abolish the Standards Board regime through the Localism Bill which was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010 and is anticipated to receive Royal Assent in late 2011.

The Government proposes to:-

- Abolish Standards for England
- Remove the First-Tier Tribunal's jurisdiction over Member Conduct
- Remove the national Code of Conduct for councillors and the requirement to have a Standards Committee
- Allow Authorities to choose if they have a local code or Standards Committee
- Create a criminal offence relating to failure to register or declare interests

The letter from the Chair of Standards for England to the Standard Committee Chairs and the letter to him from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government outlining the Government's proposals to abolish the Standards Board regime and proposed transitional measures are attached at Appendix A

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications in this report.

5.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities

There are no Diversity implications in this report

5.3 Human Rights

There are no human rights implications in this report.

5.4 Sustainability

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

5.5 Risk

There are no direct risks arising from this report providing that the Police Authority maintains the Local Standards Committee in accordance to the legal requirements.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Although Police Authorities are separate entities to Local government the regulations relating to Standards has also applied to Police Authorities in the same way that it has to Local Government and there are no indications that this will not remain the case. Therefore the assumption is that any changes to Standards for Local Government will apply equally to Police Authorities.

6.2 The Monitoring Officer will inform Members of any information received and its implications for this Standards Committee

Julie Leng
A/Chief Executive