



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
**All Wards - Corporate Issue**

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**  
**Standards Committee**

**25 January 2006**

---

**Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future**

---

**Report of the Corporate Director of Resources, Access and Diversity**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To inform the Committee of the publication, by H.M. Government, of a Discussion Paper 'Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future', and seek the Committee's views on how the Council should respond to this proposed strategy.

**2. Report**

The Government has published a Discussion Paper, 'Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future', which sets out its vision for a future comprehensive conduct regime for local authority Members and employees. A copy is attached to this report.

Last year, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Graham Committee) made recommendations about the local government conduct regime including the role of the Standards Board for England, in Chapter 3 of its tenth report 'Getting the Balance Right'. The ODPM Select Committee also made recommendations following its Inquiry into the 'Role and Effectiveness of the Standards Board for England'. Subsequently, in the autumn, the Standards Board presented recommendations to the ODPM following its review of the Code of Conduct for Members which Ministers had asked the Board to conduct.

This Discussion Paper reflects the Government response to the Graham and Select Committees, as well as having regard to the Standards Board's recommendations for amending the Code of Conduct for Members.

The Paper also indicates the approach the Government is minded to follow on the conduct of employees, in particular on the political restrictions which apply to local government employees, the pay of political assistants and a code of conduct for employees. In reaching these views, the Government has had regard to the responses received to the consultation that the ODPM undertook on these issues last year.

The overall approach to conduct set out in the Paper would involve the following principal changes to current arrangements:-

C:\DATA\REPC\CP1231LME

### Conduct Regime for Local Councillors

- Initial assessment of all misconduct allegations to be undertaken by Standards Committees, rather than the Standards Board;
- Local Standards Committees to be responsible for investigating and determining most cases;
- The Standards Board to adopt a more strategic, advisory and monitoring role, but retaining responsibility for investigating the most serious misconduct allegations;
- Improvements to the operation and composition of local Standards Committees, with independent chairs and committees to include independent members with a balance of experience; and,
- A clearer, simpler code of conduct, including changes to the rules relating to personal and prejudicial interests.

### Conduct Regime for Local Government Employees

- Issue a code of conduct for local government employees;
- Retain the current principle that senior and sensitive posts should be politically restricted, but to ensure that only the most senior and sensitive posts are covered;
- Discontinue the post of the Independent Adjudicator, and provide for authorities' Standards Committees to make decisions on posts exempt from restrictions;
- Uprate the current rate of pay for political assistants by Statutory Instrument, and provide for future increases to be permanently linked to local government pay scales.

The Government has indicated that it believes such an approach would both deliver a clearer and more proportionate conduct regime for local government Members and employees, and ensure that the public can continue to have confidence in those who serve them. It now intends to work with the Standards Board and other stakeholders to carry forward the changes identified in the Paper, having regard to any comments and debate the Paper itself generates. Certain of these changes would require primary legislation and the Government has stated that it intends to seek this at the next convenient opportunity Parliamentary time allows.

### **3. Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to:-

- (i) make any comments on the Discussion Paper which can, as appropriate, be fed back to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; and,
- (ii) consider ways in which the Council can start to address the various elements and proposals contained within this Discussion Document.

**FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**4. Financial Implications**

**5. Legal Implications**

There are no additional legal implications.  
Peter Nicholls (Head of Legal Services).

**6. Other Implications**

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	<b>Not at this stage</b>	
Policy	<b>Not at this stage</b>	
Sustainable and Environmental	<b>Not at this stage</b>	
Crime and Disorder	<b>Not at this stage</b>	
Human Rights Act	<b>Not at this stage</b>	
Elderly/People on Low Income	<b>Not at this Stage</b>	

**7. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972**

None

**8. Consultations**

None

**9. Report Author**

Charles Poole  
Service Director (Democratic Services)  
extn. 7015

