

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	Audit & Standards Committee
Date of Committee	19 November 2007
Report Title	Standards Board for England – Annual Assembly newsletter.
Summary	This report attaches the latest issue of the Annual Assembly newsletter, The Daily Detail, from the Standards Board for England. This newsletter replaces this month’s Bulletin and features a roundup of the recent Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees. Also attached is the Local Filter summary from the Standards Board website. The next issue of the Bulletin will be published as normal in December 2007.
For further information please contact:	Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator Tel: 01926 412476 gretaneedham@warwickshire.gov.uk
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No.
Background papers	None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Other Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Local Member(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Other Elected Members | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Cabinet Member | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Chief Executive | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Legal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | David Carter and Greta Needham |
| Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other Chief Officers | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| District Councils | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by
this Committee

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Agenda No

Audit & Standards Committee – 19 November 2007

Standards Board Bulletins

Report of the Strategic Director of Performance & Development

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the Sixth Annual Assembly newsletter, The Daily Detail, and previous issues of The Daily Detail that were distributed during the Assembly.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report attaches the latest issue of the Annual Assembly newsletter, Issue Three, The Daily Detail, from the Standards Board for England. This newsletter replaces this month's Bulletin and features a roundup of the recent Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees (Appendix A).

1.2 The next issue of the Bulletin will be published as normal in December 2007.

2. Newsletter highlights.

2. 1 Newsletter highlights include:

- Summaries of the discussions that took place at major sessions and events and reference to The Local Filter sessions and Deputy Chair Patricia Hughes' speech on day one of the Assembly.
- Conference photographs
- Delegate feedback

2.2 Attached is the Local Filter summary from the Standards Board website and latest news on the Local Filter system pilot projects (Appendix B).

2. 3 Previous issues of The Daily Detail, Issues One and Two that were distributed during the Assembly, are also attached to this report (Appendices C and D).

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director of Performance & Development
Shire Hall
Warwick

1 November 2007

It's down to you

Closing this year's Annual Assembly, his last as Chair of the Standards Board for England, Sir Anthony Holland considered the importance of the work carried out by standards committees and monitoring officers.

He said: "Sometimes I reflect on the reasons why I have spent seven years at the Standards Board for England... coming here to this assembly immediately provides the answer.

"I do have a deep-seated and abiding belief in doing the right thing, in ethical conduct, in integrity. I know that this belief is shared equally deeply by all of you in this audience, the monitoring officers and the members of the standards committees both here and up and down the country.

"When I used to admit solicitors to the Roll at the admission ceremony

at The Law Society, I used to emphasise above all the importance of integrity and of trust, of always doing the right thing even when no one is watching you. The personal reputation that one has is everything, and the Code of Conduct only encapsulates what most of us want to do anyway.

"The public has a deep yearning for truth and honesty in public life and that is where you, the monitoring officers and the standards committees, have a key role to play."

“ The Code of Conduct only encapsulates what most of us want to do anyway. ”

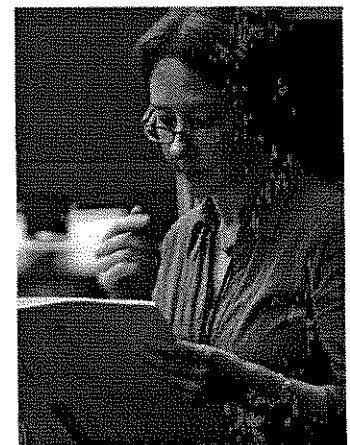
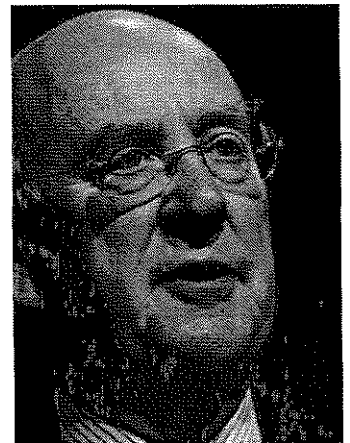
See you in 2008

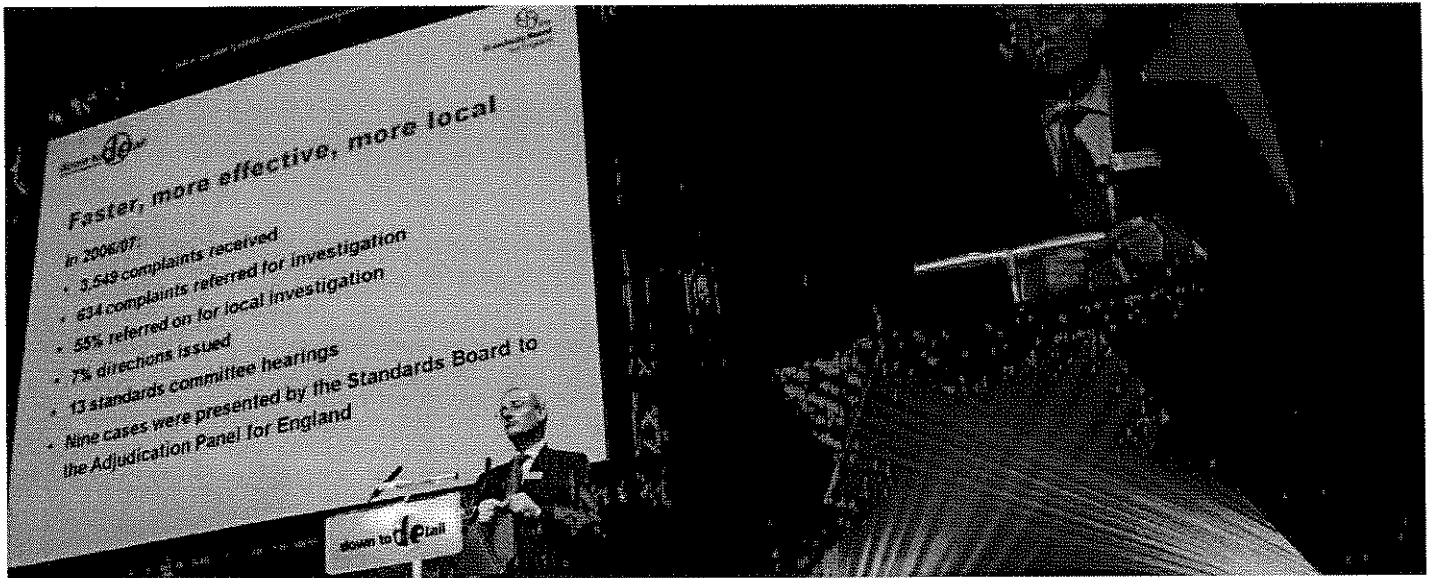
Planning has started for next year's Annual Assembly and we already know where and when it will be held. The event will again take

place after the party conferences at the ICC in Birmingham, on Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 October.

The theme and content are yet to be finalised, but it is likely that one focus will be the opportunity for authorities to share their experiences of receiving complaints, deciding what to investigate, and reaching outcomes that help build public confidence.

In the meantime, put the dates in your diary and be prepared to book early in the new year when we send out the details of the 2008 conference. This information will be sent both to those who attended this year and those who missed out because they didn't book quickly enough in 2007.





This year's Annual Assembly featured a variety of sessions, ranging from debates to workshops and Q&A events. These summaries give you a flavour of some of the delegate discussions that took place.

The Local filter: In detail

In these sessions, delegates were taken through the local filter process from handling the initial complaint to evaluating the outcome.

There were eight sessions in all. Some catered specifically for monitoring officers, others for standards committee members and some were designed for a mix of delegates.

A recurring theme was concern over the size of

standards committees, and their ability to effectively manage the conflict issues at different stages of the case handling process when changes to the new framework are introduced. Details of the joint arrangements pilot trial, which is a possible solution to this, can be found on page 5.

Sub-committees, as mentioned in Deputy Chair Patricia Hughes' speech on day one, could also solve the problem of a standards committee having few members. These could be set up to handle different stages of the process and might lead to a more effective use of resources, as fewer members would be excluded from the system due to conflicting interests. Other issues raised included the impact of

the new framework on resources and workloads. One of the benefits of the local filter pilots was that they eased the transition for participants and allowed them to understand the impact on resources. However, delegates requested further Standards Board guidance on solutions to practical problems that could arise.

Many also said that the flowchart for filtering complaints was an invaluable aid as it helped members focus on problems and cooperate in finding solutions. A copy of the flowchart is available in the Session materials section of our Annual Assembly website.

Guidance on the process for filtering complaints and on the Code of Conduct was

requested by several delegates. The Standards Board has recently produced a DVD on the Code of Conduct. We have also published factsheets, which, when used together with existing guidance on the Code of Conduct, offer clear explanations about potentially difficult parts of the revised Code. Both the guidance and the factsheets are available from

www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Download our conference material

Material from this year's conference is now on our dedicated Annual Assembly website. You can find speeches, handouts and presentations under 'Session materials' in the programme section of www.annualassembly.co.uk

Breakout sessions

Day one

Below is a brief summary of the issues and topics raised in some of the breakout sessions from day one.

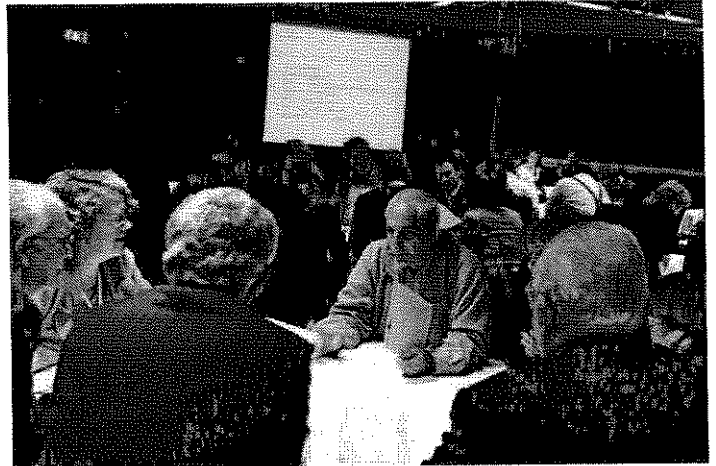
While the revised Code of Conduct contains no specific definition of bullying, many delegates attending **Cracking the revised Code** suggested that bullying is an important provision of it. Please see our factsheet on bullying and the Code, which is available from our website, for more details on this issue. The session also referred to equality provisions and to speeches made earlier in the day, which called for increased recognition of the importance of standards of behaviour.

Delegates who attended **Referrals: Lessons learnt** felt that the toolkit for the assessment process should be disseminated as soon as possible. There were also calls for additional guidance on matters

such as predetermination. The Standards Board recently published information on this subject in an occasional paper called *Predisposition, predetermination or bias, and the Code*, which can be found on the publications section of our website.

It was suggested that more information is required on the timescales for obtaining correct facts in **Investigations: Tackling complex cases**. One member of a standards committee said they now had a better idea of the length of time it takes to write up complex reports and the kind of information necessary for such reports.

Delegates were given the opportunity to speak directly to representatives of the Standards Board in two **Q&A sessions**, one catering for standards committee members and the other for



monitoring officers. In their session, monitoring officers voiced concerns about putting in formal constitutional arrangements, given that government regulations have not yet been issued. A panel of Standards Board members urged officers to work on the basis of what they already know and to amend arrangements later, if necessary.

Day two

Practical mediation skills showed how mediation could be used to resolve disputes and to reduce the potential of a complaint leading to a full investigation. While the session highlighted that not all situations can be mediated, it stressed the importance of managing relationships if authorities are to be run effectively.

In **Positive about towns and parishes**, delegates heard a series of short presentations on how to work effectively with their town and parish representatives. Several delegates emphasised the importance of more training and a better understanding of the Code among parish councillors. The significant role that monitoring officers and county associations play in leading to a greater awareness of the Code among parish councils was also stressed.

The session entitled **State of independence** aimed to help independent chairs and members build the skills necessary to respond to challenges presented by the local filter. Delegates from newly-created committees felt the interactive session was particularly useful as a training tool.

Fringe sessions

The 2007 Annual Assembly featured several optional fringe events that covered a range of diverse subjects currently affecting local government.

Parish councillors: Community champions gave an insight into the innovative and diverse work councillors are involved with across the country. The reception which followed also gave an opportunity for

networking and sharing experiences.

Guardians of good governance, the code and the law – mission possible? by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS), was an open debate on the role of monitoring officers and looked at the support needed by monitoring officers from organisations such as ACSeS to make their jobs work.

The session called **Promoting the interests of independent members: Current and future challenges** was an open discussion held by the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce).

And **Partnership, ethics, governance and citizen redress** presented an opportunity for delegates to hear about

the Local Government Ombudsman special report *Local Partnerships and Citizen Redress*. The report, produced in conjunction with the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA), showed the effects of considering partnerships with authorities.

Settling the score

What's the score? – the main session on day two of this year's Annual Assembly – was an open discussion on the current ethical framework. Chief Executive David Prince chaired the session and was joined by three guest speakers who presented the results of studies on the regulatory framework.

Dawn Hands, Research Director and Board Director at BMG Research, revealed that many of those forming

the bedrock of the new framework are aware of the changes lying ahead. Nearly all monitoring officers (99%) and the majority of standards committee members (90%) said they knew of the changes. However, concerns were raised over the level of awareness among town and parish authorities – with 30% not aware.

Similarly, less than half of town and parish authorities felt that their monitoring officers were ready for the transition (44%).

Alison Kelly, Strategy Adviser for Governance and Accountability at the Audit Commission, spoke next. She said that findings from the ethical governance diagnostic self-assessment surveys show a general picture of readiness and that authorities are actively encouraging high standards.

However, the responses suggest many require a greater awareness of the roles and responsibilities of standards committees.

They also state that the importance of the ethical framework and the work carried out by standards committees needs to be communicated more widely, bringing a culture of high standards into the mainstream.

The final session speaker was Jessica Crowe, Executive Director of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and member of the Department for Communities and Local Government's Local

continued overleaf

Councillors' Commission, who compared the work of scrutiny and standards committees.

Jessica highlighted the importance of leadership among standards committees and pointed out the value of having independent members working alongside elected members. She also stressed the importance of taking transparent decisions, reflecting one of the principles in the CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) good governance framework, and having an open culture which supports this.

David reflected on the speakers' comments and noted that culture and leadership were areas for further focus.

He also responded to questions from delegates and summarised that high standards are a cornerstone of good governance, which is essential to ensure the delivery of good services.

Putting pilots into practice

Results of our recent local filter pilot trials were revealed at this year's Annual Assembly.

More work has been done since, and the Standards Board for England believes that the pilots can be used to determine how the new ethical framework could be implemented.

Patricia Hughes, Deputy Chair of the Standards Board for England, spoke about the three pilots in the conference's opening session.

The first aimed to measure how authorities carried out their decision-making. Patricia said its results show that standards committees may adopt lower referrals thresholds than the Standards Board. The results also suggest that, in future, standards committees might recommend alternative measures to

investigation, for example, member training.

Details of the second pilot, which investigated joint arrangements, were also discussed. This pilot examined the scope for standards committees working together and assessed the impact this would have on resources. The pilot offered four different types of joint working structures, with most participants preferring a joint structure handling the local filter function.

Feedback from delegates attending the conference suggests there is a demand for the use of joint arrangements, as this could solve the problem of recruiting enough independent members for standards committee panels.

Preparation for a third pilot to develop the Standards Board's

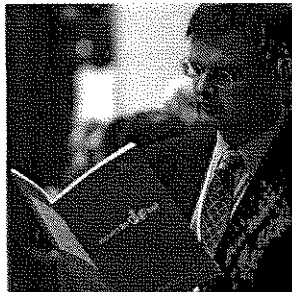
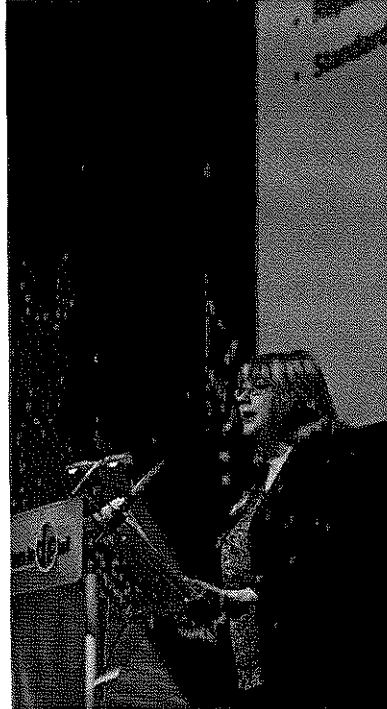
future monitoring and auditing arrangements is currently underway.

This pilot is creating an online information return system for use by monitoring officers on a quarterly basis, which the Standards Board hopes will aid its evolution as a light touch strategic regulator.

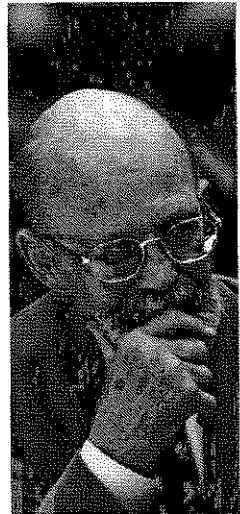
The online tool aims to provide authorities with their own complaint tracking system, which will in turn be risk-assessed by the Standards Board.

Final touches are being made to the system, which the Standards Board hopes to make available as soon as possible.

Conference in pictures



Your thoughts



Thank you for all of your comments and feedback about this year's conference. Here's a selection of what you had to say about the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees:

"Excellent at imparting understanding of the issues standards committees face when local filtering is introduced."

"Best sessions were the practical ones – more of those please."

"All speakers were very knowledgeable. An excellent, very useful conference."

"It would be very helpful if future conferences had some sessions focused on police authorities."

"Most useful event I have been to for years."

"Slightly more time for workshops – those I attended were very good, but more time would have allowed for more depth."

"It has spurred me on to go back and get the standards committee to 'up its game' and to start formulating some of the decisions and actions we need to make a start on."

"Very professional, well-planned event – thank you, it has been invaluable."

Contact

The Standards Board for England
Fourth Floor, Griffin House
40 Lever Street
Manchester M1 1BB

Enquiries: 0845 078 8181

Minicom: 0161 817 5449 **Fax:** 0161 817 5499

Email: enquiries@standardsboard.gov.uk

Web: www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Local Filter summary from the Standards Board website and latest news on the Local Filter pilot projects.

The local filter and changes to the standards framework

Q. What is happening?

A. New arrangements for local government are taking shape so we have created this dedicated section on our website to keep you informed of the changes and what they will mean for local authorities and the Standards Board for England's role.

We will also be keeping you up-to-date with our progress in developing guidance for local authorities and helping the government to develop regulations to support the system.

The key changes to the framework are:

- Standards committees will be responsible for receiving allegations and deciding whether any action needs to be taken (commonly referred to as the 'local filter').
- Standards committees must be chaired by an independent member.
- Standards committees will report periodically to the Standards Board.
- Standards committees will be allowed to enter into joint working arrangements with other standards committees.
- The Standards Board will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of local arrangements, including supporting authorities which are experiencing difficulties and driving up their performance.

Regulations need to be drafted to prescribe how some of these provisions will work in practice, not least the local filter and monitoring arrangements. The local filter is on course to come into effect in April 2008 and the Standards Board is conscious of the need to have the legislation and our guidance in place before then.

Standards Board guidance

To support local authorities, the Standards Board will be producing a range of comprehensive guidance on the framework for local authorities.

Although we are currently preparing this guidance based on what we anticipate the regulations will contain, we need the final regulations to be in place before we can finish and publish it. This is to gain the important details we need to make sure the guidance is correct, and so give standards committees the certainty they need in preparing effectively for their new roles.

The government is working hard to have the regulations in place as soon as possible and, as mentioned above, we will keep you updated.

In the meantime, this website will provide as much information as possible to help in preparing for the new roles and responsibilities.

The published guidance will focus on five areas:

- the role and make-up of standards committees
- the local filter and how it will operate
- local investigations
- local determinations
- monitoring and audit arrangements

Keeping you updated

We will post regular updates on our [Latest news](#) page on any developments to the regulations, guidance and our work generally that relate to the new standards framework.

If you have an enquiry about the proposed changes, please email enquiries@standardsboard.gov.uk or phone 0845 078 8181.

12 October 2007

Local filter system piloted

Scores of local authorities have volunteered to take part in three pilot projects ahead of the move to the new ethical framework.

In preparation for the new arrangements, which will see standards committees making initial assessments of misconduct allegations, we asked authorities to provide feedback on the following proposals:

- Operating the local filter system for complaints.
- Joint working arrangements for standards committees.
- Developing the Standards Board's monitoring and auditing role.

We are pleased to say that 38 authorities took part in the local filter pilot, while seven groups – comprising up to 47 authorities – were consulted on the joint working pilot.

The local filter and joint working pilots took place between May and September 2007 and the findings will be published at the Standards Board's [Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees](#).

Twenty authorities are due to complete the third pilot, relating to the monitoring and audit role of the Standards Board, later this year.

The findings will provide valuable information on the practicalities of these proposals and help inform the Standards Board's guidance to local authorities.

You can read more about the pilots in [Bulletin 35](#), which is available to download from our website, and there will be further updates in our news section in due course.

Ends.

In depth, in detail

Results of the recent Standards Board pilot on operating the local filter will be revealed during the **Local filter: In detail** sessions, taking place from 12.00pm today.

Around 40 authorities took part in the pilot, which gave us a valuable insight into how the filter will operate at local level. Officers and members from several of these authorities will talk about their experience in the sessions.

Standards Board officers were invited to visit some of the standards committees carrying out the exercise,

which saw them filter ten real life complaints and two appeals already considered by the Standards Board.

There were a challenging mix of clear-cut and more complex cases, and also some thought-provoking borderline situations.

We are encouraged by the results and believe they show that local government has the capacity, expertise and confidence to manage the local filter. The pilot helped to increase confidence and knowledge of the revised Code of Conduct among the local authorities taking part and

highlighted the quality of independent chairs of standards committees.

Information on two further local filter pilot projects, covering joint working and the Standards Board's future monitoring and audit role, will also be featured today in the **Managing the filter: Resources, challenges and solutions** and **Safeguarding local standards** sessions. These presentations will be available on our conference website shortly after the conference at: www.annualassembly.co.uk



Key feedback from the local filter pilot:

- Each complaint will take an average of 20 minutes to process, though this will vary from case to case.
- Standards committees' confidence and knowledge of the Code of Conduct will increase once they begin to filter cases themselves.
- On average, local authorities have been about twice as likely to refer complaints for investigation as the Standards Board.

Agenda



08.30 - 10.15 Registration

09.16 - 10.00 Getting up to speed

10.15 - 10.25 Welcome

10.25 - 10.40 Defining the detail

10.40 - 10.55 Evolving standards

10.55 - 11.15 Local filter:
Countdown to 2008

11.15 - 11.30 Question time

11.30 - 12.00 Refreshments

12.00 - 13.15 Local filter:
In detail

13.15 - 14.30 Lunch

14.30 - 15.45 Breakout sessions

15.45 - 16.15 Refreshments

16.15 - 17.30 Breakout sessions

17.30 Close of day one

17.45 - 18.45 Fringe events (optional)

19.30 - 20.00 Drinks reception

20.00 - late Conference dinner

Welcome to Down to detail

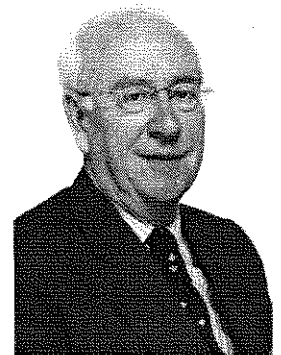
We at the Standards Board are pleased to welcome you to the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, one of the most important events in the calendar for all those working with the Code of Conduct.

The focus of this year's conference is on meeting the challenges of the new local filter for complaints. It aims to boost your understanding of the Code, and help you to develop the skills and knowledge you need to deliver a high standard of effective local governance for your authority.

Of course, the Standards Board has its own challenges to meet – namely in defining what the new strategic framework should deliver, determining our light touch approach and providing you with the appropriate guidance and support.

Opening plenary speeches from Chief Executive David Prince and Deputy Chair Patricia Hughes will give more information on this changing role, and how we aim to help you to meet the challenges ahead.

We hope you will find the conference productive and we look forward to hearing



your views. We also hope that you have an enjoyable and pleasant few days here in Birmingham and benefit from the networking opportunities available.

Sir Anthony Holland
Chair,
The Standards Board for England

What's the score?

Is the new regulatory framework fit and ready to deal with greater local ownership? Hall 1, Tuesday 16 October, 10.45pm - 12.00pm

Key to lanyard colours

The colour of delegates' lanyards (neck cords) can be used to identify their position or profession.

Please wear your badge at all times.

WHITE	Monitoring officers
YELLOW	Independent members
DARK GREEN	Standards committee members
ORANGE	Chief executives
BLACK	Council leaders
RED	Speakers
PURPLE	Conference steering committee members
JADE GREEN	The Standards Board for England board members
BLUE	Others (delegates who don't fit into any of the categories above)

Fringe events

Tonight there will be a range of optional fringe events, which provide a great opportunity for getting up to speed on the diverse issues currently affecting local government.

All events take place from 5.45pm to 6.45pm.

This year's sessions are as follows:

■ **Hall 6: Parish councillors: Community champions**
National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

■ **Hall 7: Promoting the interests of independent members: Current and future challenges**
Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)

■ **Hall 8b: ACSes – guardians of good governance, the Code and the law – mission possible?**
The Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSes)

■ **Hall 11b: Partnership, ethics, governance and citizen redress**
Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

Any questions?

Standards Board staff members will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the Code, or the work of the Standards Board, and to respond to your feedback. You can also drop completed question sheets in the conference postboxes.

Steering committee 2007

We would like to thank all members of the 2007 Annual Assembly's steering committee for the commitment they have made in helping stage this event.

If you would like to volunteer to be one of our committee members for the seventh Annual Assembly in 2008, please complete the application form enclosed in your delegate pack and submit it at the conference enquiries desk.

Quentin Baker
Monitoring Officer,
Borough Solicitor
Cheltenham Borough Council

Anita Grosz
Independent Chair of
Standards Committee,
Wokingham Borough Council

The Reverend Canon
Tim Barker
Independent Chair of
Standards Committee,
Lincolnshire County Council,
and Independent Vice Chair
of Standards Committee,
South Holland District Council

Elizabeth Hall
Board Member,
The Standards Board for
England

Patricia Hughes
Deputy Chair,
The Standards Board for
England

Councillor Donald
Beckett
Member of Standards
Committee,
Vale Royal Borough Council

Peter Lacey
County Secretary,
Somerset Association of Local
Councils

Joy Bowes
Head of Legal and
Democratic Services,
St Edmundsbury Borough
Council

Derek Phillips
Independent Chair of
Standards Committee (and
Independent Member)
Teignbridge District Council,
and Independent Member of
Standards Committee Devon
Fire and Rescue Authority

Jonathan Eatough
Head of Democratic and
Legal Services,
Kettering Borough Council

Louise A Somerville
Williams
Independent Member of
Standards Committee,
Mendip District Council

Pam Essler
Independent Chair of
Standards Committee,
City of Bradford Metropolitan
District Council

Mike Wilkinson
Independent Chair of
Standards Committee,
Leeds City Council

Councillor Shirley Flint
Board Member,
The Standards Board for
England

Stop press!

In your delegate bags you'll find a copy of our *Case Review 2007*. This year's Review takes the reader through every paragraph of the revised Code of Conduct and answers questions arising from each paragraph in turn. It draws on the experience of the Standards Board's legal

team, who provide ethical standards officers and monitoring officers with expert legal advice.

Don't forget, you can find the most up-to-date news on recent cases in the Case Summaries section of the Standards Board's website:
www.standardsboard.gov.uk

You will also find a copy of our recent occasional paper on our site entitled *Predisposition, Predetermination or Bias, and the Code*, which helps clarify predetermination and bias – issues which have proved difficult and controversial for many members and monitoring officers.

CPD accreditation

The conference is an opportunity for solicitors and barristers to earn credits for their continuing professional development (CPD) schemes. Solicitors can earn credits towards the Law Society's CPD

scheme and barristers can also claim accreditation for the General Council of the Bar's CPD scheme. The amount of credit available at the conference this year totals 9.5 hours. To claim it, eligible delegates need

to register their attendance at the enquiries desk. We would also remind all delegates who are solicitors or barristers to update their personal training records.

Waste not want not...



Please use the recycle bins located around the conference centre for any of your unwanted papers. Thank you.

Contact

The Standards Board for England
Fourth Floor, Griffin House
40 Lever Street
Manchester M1 1BB

Enquiries: 0845 078 8181

Minicom: 0161 817 5449 Fax: 0161 817 5499

Email: annualassembly2007@standardsboard.gov.uk

Web: www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Conference dinner

Drinks reception at 7.30pm,
dinner commences at 8.00pm.

Your contribution is vital says MP

Parmjit Dhanda MP yesterday described how responsibilities across local government are moving back to where they belonged – at a local level.

The minister said that following the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, currently going through its final parliamentary stages, there will be consultation on the regulations

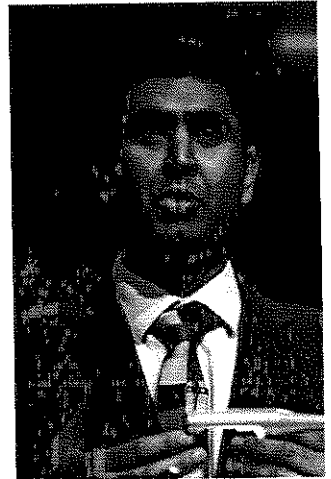
needed for the detailed operation of the new system.

Mr Dhanda, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government, recognised that there are concerns about resources and that the system will bring new challenges.

However, standards committees and

monitoring officers will be aided by the support and guidance of the Standards Board, and the clearer, simpler Code of Conduct, which will be looked at again early next year to make sure it is absolutely fit for purpose.

The minister finished by emphasising the vital contribution that delegates can make to building trust and respect in local governance.



Parmjit Dhanda MP

“ Maintaining standards of conduct is part of the bedrock of our democracy. ”

Counting down to local ownership

Patricia Hughes, Deputy Chair for the Standards Board for England, outlined how the new ethical framework will be implemented.



Patricia Hughes CBE

Patricia described the new roles and responsibilities the changes will bring for authorities and the Standards Board, gave details of possible issues arising from complaints, and explained how performance will be reported and monitored.

She said that the new framework is on track to be in place by April 2008. The Standards Board is already preparing advice and guidance for the change to ensure that it is both

smooth and effective. Findings from two recent pilot trials and details of a third pilot were also revealed.

Patricia said the thought-provoking results from these pilots will be used to help the Standards Board monitor performance and publish appropriate guidance.

She concluded that there is strong evidence that authorities are already gaining confidence in their role

as champions of high standards, and that this will be further strengthened by the new framework.

Chief Executive David Prince also spoke of new responsibilities in his speech earlier in the morning.

He said that the building blocks for local ownership are already in place and that the Standards Board will strive to ensure that the system is operated effectively at local level.

Please register your email address at the Enquiries Desk to receive the third issue

Agenda



08.00 – 09.00	Refreshments
09.00 – 10.15	Breakout sessions
10.15 – 10.45	Refreshments
10.45 – 12.00	What's the score?
12.00 – 13.15	Lunch
13.15 – 14.30	Breakout sessions
14.30 – 14.45	Comfort break
14.45 – 15.00	All clear
15.00 – 15.30	The next step
15.30 – 16.00	Networking/refreshments
16.00	Close

Find out more

Information on topics covered in the practical sessions can be found in our new **factsheets**, which are available online.

Same time – same place

All delegates attending this year's conference will receive booking information for next year's Annual Assembly as soon as it becomes available.

The Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees will be back at the ICC in Birmingham from 13-14 October 2008. We look forward to seeing you again.

Contact

The Standards Board for England
Fourth Floor, Griffin House
40 Lever Street
Manchester M1 1BB

Enquiries: 0845 078 8181

Minicom: 0161 817 5449 **Fax:** 0161 817 5499

Email: annualassembly2007@standardsboard.gov.uk

Web: www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Joining forces

Yesterday afternoon, delegates heard of the ways that standards committees can use joint arrangements to tackle the challenges presented by the local filter.

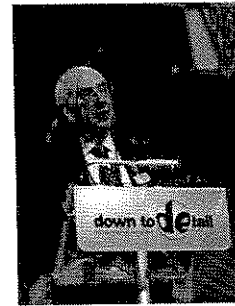
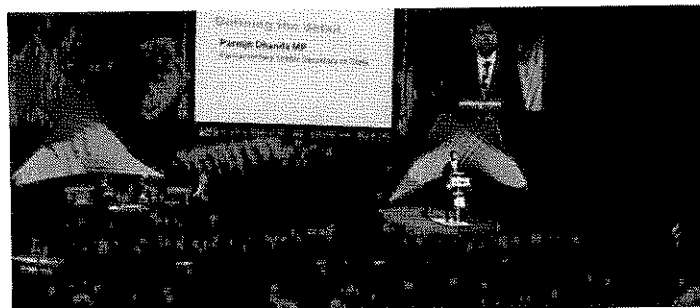
The session, called **Managing the filter: Resources, challenges and solutions** aimed to address some of the concerns authorities might have over their new responsibilities.

Joy Bowes and Mark Heath shared their insights into working

with joint arrangements, gained from taking part in pilots with their local authorities.

Their experience revealed the diverse ways authorities can use joint arrangements to take on the local filter – and it proved that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

The session showed that pooling resources among standards committees can be an effective way of meeting the challenges ahead.



Don't forget....

You can download handouts from many of the sessions at our conference website:
www.annualassembly.co.uk

See you next year

We hope you enjoyed the conference and look forward to seeing you at the 2008 Annual Assembly.