

By: Head of Democratic Services

To: Standards Committee – 6 March 2007

Subject: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH BILL**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report advises Members of the changes to the responsibilities of local authority standards committees proposed in the recently-published Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill.

FOR INFORMATION

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill was published just before Christmas and is currently going through its Committee Stage in the House of Commons.
2. The Bill implements a number of the proposals in the Local Government White Paper. As far as the Standards Committee is concerned, the main interest will be in Part 9 of the Bill. This has the effect of implementing the long-awaited reversal of the existing standards regime so that individual Standards Committees, instead of the Standards Board for England (SBE), will become responsible for dealing with allegations of misconduct by Members in the first instance, in each case deciding whether to:-
 - (a) refer the allegation to the Monitoring Officer; or
 - (b) refer the allegation to the Standards Board for England; or
 - (c) take no further action.
3. The Standards Board for England will still have a role in considering some allegations (as set out above) but will mainly be responsible for issuing guidance to, and monitoring the performance of, local authorities standards committees.
4. Standards Committees will also become responsible for determining applications that a particular officer post should or should not be included in their authorities' list of politically restricted posts.
5. Part 9 of the Bill also extends the scope of the Members' Code of Conduct to Members' private lives (as described in the separate item on the Proposed New Code of Conduct elsewhere on the Committee's agenda).
6. Further reports will be made to the Committee as and when additional information and guidance about standards committees' new responsibilities are issued.

7. Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

Background documents: None

S C Ballard
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