

## **STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND SECOND ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report appraises Members of the outcome of the Standards Board Annual conference.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Second Annual Assembly of the Standards Board was held at Birmingham ICC on 9-10 June 2003. The Council's delegates were Cllr.J.Pullen, Mr.B.Flynn and the Head of Legal Services.
- 2.2 The conference included two days of specialised workshops on the practical implementation of the Code of Conduct for standards committee members and monitoring officers.
- 2.3 The event also provided a platform to launch the publication of the long awaited regulations under section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000 providing for referral of matters for local determination.

### **3 DETAILS**

- 3.1 The conference was addressed by the Rt. Hon Nick Raynsford MP and Christopher Leslie MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. Other guest speakers at the conference included Simon Hoggart, The Guardian, Claire Fox, Institute of Ideas, Professor Bob Worcester (MORI) and Dr Anthony Grayling from Birkbeck University.
- 3.2 There were lively discussions about the nature of ethics in local government, information as to the work undertaken by the Board and through a number of workshops more detailed analysis of the provisions of the code, the new regulations and the adjudication process.
- 3.3 The Standards Board has dealt with around 3,500 complaints last year. Only half of the case were judged to warrant investigation and of those investigated only about a fifth were found to be serious enough to refer to the adjudication panel.

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- 3.4 The publication of the section 66 regulations laid in parliament on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003 puts in place a key part of the system that will enable allegations to be heard locally. The Board will be providing guidance on their operation later in the month.
- 3.5 The Key Speakers emphasised the Government's committed to maintaining high standards in public life and its belief that a strong ethical framework is essential to build up greater confidence in local politics and to encourage greater participation. This is seen as an important challenge with the Standards Board and the new ethical frame work having a major role in its achievement

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the report be noted

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#### **Background Papers:**

None

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