

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

12TH JUNE 2008

LOCAL ASSESSMENT – COMPOSITION OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton – Monitoring Officer

1. SUMMARY

The Standards Committee decided upon the composition of its sub-committees at its meeting on 28th April 2008. This report updates members on the Standards Board for England guidance and requests members to consider one minor amendment to the composition of those sub-committees.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To amend the composition of the Final Determination Sub-Committee to allow up to 2 parish councillors to sit on the Final Determination Sub-Committee when the subject member is a parish councillor.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Standards Committee agreed the composition of the Standards Committee sub-committees at the meeting on 28th April 2008. Officers had advised against allowing members to participate in both assessment and final determinations, based partly on oral advice received from the Standards Board for England (“SBE”). However, the SBE guidance has now been published and does not recommend that members should not sit at both assessment and final determination stages of the process. Therefore this aspect does not need to be reconsidered.

3.2 However, one consequence of the decision taken on 28th April 2008 is that the composition of the Final Determination Sub-Committee allows only one parish councillor to sit, irrespective of whether the subject member is a district or parish councillor. It is suggested that it would be appropriate for up to two parish councillors to sit on the Final Determination Sub-Committee when the subject member is a parish councillor and members are requested to consider this minor amendment.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 introduce the new local assessment system.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Improvement – Customer Service. Complaints against councillors will be dealt with more locally and, once the new system has been embedded, more efficiently.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- *Loss of public confidence in the ethical standards of elected members*
- *Intervention by the Standards Board for England in the event of the local assessment regime not being satisfactorily implemented*

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: *Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services*
Key Objective Ref No: 2
Key Objective: *Effective Ethical Governance*

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

The new local assessment regime will be widely publicised in accordance with guidance to be issued by the Standards Board for England to ensure that the public are aware of how to make a complaint that a councillor may have breached the Code of Conduct. This is likely to include:

- Prominent and easy-to-navigate links on the Council's website, especially on the 'democracy' and 'councillors' pages.
- Leaflets on display, and available in the Customer Service Centre, libraries and in the public areas of the Council House and from parish clerks and offices in the district.
- Posters and publicity in Citizens Advice Bureaux and community groups, including those serving people who are traditionally more difficult to reach.
- Articles in the local press.
- Leaflets put out at meetings.
- Publicity during Local Democracy Week and at other community events.
- Assistance for people with a disability or whose first language is not English.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	No
Executive Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

None.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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