



City of Westminster

Standards Committee

Date: 13 July 2010

Classification: For General Release

Title: Response to Government Proposals

Report of: Head of Legal Services

Wards Involved: None

Policy Context: Business Like Approach

Financial Summary: There are no financial implications

Report Author and Contact Details: Mick Steward
Tel: 020 7641 3134
Email: msteward@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 20 May 2010 the Government published its formal programme which included a wide range of proposals which will impact on local government. These included a brief reference to the proposal to abolish Standards for England.
- 1.2 This report sets out proposals for dealing with the Council's draft response to the expected consultation in the event that a response is needed prior to the next meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee indicate its preliminary views in respect of the issues set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.
- 2.2 That the proposal for responding to the consultation as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the main report be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1 Significantly for the work of the Standards Committee the Government's proposals are not yet clear in respect of the Members' Code and related matters, the Government has, however, committed to abolishing the Standards Board. Further details are awaited as it is not clear whether the Government proposes to first abolish Standards for England but also Standards Committees themselves or aspects of the local assessment of complaints.
- 3.2 It will no doubt become clearer when the draft legislation is published. As the next meeting of the Committee is not scheduled until 15 November 2010, which may be after the closing date for responding to the consultation, currently expected in September, the Committee is asked to consider how it wishes to handle its response. It is proposed that the response be delegated to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Chairman, all Members of the Committee and Party Whips.
- 3.3 Some of the issues which may arise as part of the consultation, to which initial views are sought are:
- Whether Standards Committees should continue to exist and if so, should this be compulsory or optional?
 - Should there be a Code of Conduct for Members?
 - Should the Standards Committee continue to deal with complaints about Member conduct and if not, who should?
- 3.4 It is also worth noting that the Government have also announced its intention to abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime. It was, as part of a previous CAA audit that the ethical governance audit, was conducted.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, Please Contact Mick Steward
Tel: 020 7641 3134; Email: msteward@westminster.gov.uk**

Background Papers

- None