

Standards Committee

1 November 2004



Lobby Groups, Dual-Hatted Members and the Code of Conduct Guidance for Members

Report of Andrew North, Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Services) and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise Members about the publication of new guidance from the Standards Board for England about Lobby Groups, Dual-Hatted Members and the Code of Conduct.

Background

- 2 In its earlier guidance *How do I register and declare interests and register gifts and hospitality?* the Standards Board outlined Members' general responsibilities to register and declare interests that might affect the performance of their duties. However the Board has acknowledged that for members of lobby groups and Members who sit on more than one relevant authority and other public bodies (dual-hatted members), deciding whether an interest exists and whether that interest is personal or prejudicial, can sometimes be difficult. It can also be difficult to know when to rely on paragraph 10(2) of the Code of Conduct (paragraph 9(2) for parish councils) to allow participation in meetings.

The Guide

- 3 The Guide is designed to help Members decide how to act in the circumstances described above and is arranged in three parts.

- **Membership of lobby groups**

Practical advice and examples to help Members understand when membership of a lobby or campaign group may give rise to personal and prejudicial interests, and other important principles and legal requirements to consider when making decisions.

- **Dual-hatted members and paragraph 10(2)**

Explains the interests that can arise from service on other authorities and public bodies, and provides practical advice and examples to help Members decide when to rely on the paragraph to participate in meetings.

- **If you have a prejudicial interest**

Advice on what Members can do if they have a prejudicial interest.

- 5 I have received an advance copy of the guidance which has also been published on the Standards Board's website. The guidance will soon be sent to all local authorities in hard copy format and I will arrange to circulate it to all Members.
- 6 When Members receive the guidance they are asked to carefully study its content and if they have any queries whatsoever, they should contact either myself or one of my senior members of staff for advice. This new guidance will also be used in any future induction/and or training organised for Members.

Recommendation

- 7 That the report be noted.

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