

Standards Committee

15 August 2006

Standards Board for England
Annual Review 2005/06



Report of Lesley Davies, Acting Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise members about the publication of the Annual Review of the Standards Board for England 2005/06 entitled 'Devolution'.

Overview

2. The devolution of responsibility for the ethical agenda, increased local ownership and the changing role of the Standards Board for England are the key themes addressed in its Annual Review 2005-06.
3. The review focuses on the shift in ownership of the conduct regime to a local level. The majority of cases are now being dealt with locally and the introduction of a system of local assessment of complaints is proposed for 2008.
4. The Standards Board is committed to increasing the number of investigations at a local level and providing training, support and guidance to local authorities to achieve this. The review details the change in the work of the Standards Board as it becomes a strategic regulator overseeing the ethical framework and encouraging local authorities to take more responsibility at a local level.
5. The review also details the Standards Board's achievements over the past year, the main points of which include:
 - A successful consultation and review of the Code of Conduct, now awaiting implementation by Government
 - The initial assessment time for complaints reduced to nine working days
 - Effective partnership working with other local government organisations to develop an ethical governance toolkit for authorities to gauge their ethical performance
 - The Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, which focused on greater local ownership of the ethical agenda

6. The Board sees many challenges facing both itself and Local Authorities over the coming 12 months not least, a revised code of conduct will emphasise the need for updated guidance to explain the changes and will also assist help standards committees, monitoring officers and members to understand their responsibilities.
7. A copy of the document has been placed in the Members Resource Centre for information.

Conclusion

8. Members are asked to note the report.