

Standards

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Ethical Standards Bulletin – Autumn 2006

Welcome to the latest edition of the Ethical Standards Bulletin. This Bulletin is for Councillors from the Borough of Telford and Wrekin, Councillors from the Parish and Town Councils in the Borough and members of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority.

Future meetings of Standards Committees:-

- The next meeting of the Borough of Telford and Wrekin Standards and Audit Committee will be on 19th October 2006 at 6pm. It is anticipated that the meeting will be held at the Borough of Telford and Wrekin Civic Offices.
- The next meeting of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Standards Committee will be on 22nd January 2007. It is anticipated that this meeting will take place at the Fire Authority Headquarters in Shrewsbury.

New appointments to Standards and Audit Committee:-

We are pleased to welcome Mr Arul Selvaratnan and Mr Barry Bayley, who have been appointed as new independent members for the Standards and Audit Committee for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. Mr Selvaratnan and Mr Bayley will join the two existing independent members of the Standards and Audit Committee, Mr Andy Simpson and Mr Frank Beasland.

Update on changes to the Member Code of Conduct and system for processing complaints:-

As reported in previous editions of the Bulletin, the Government is currently looking at proposals to amend the members Code of Conduct, and also change the way in which complaints against members alleging a breach of the Code are processed.

Current indications are that the amended Code of Conduct could be in place as early as May 2006, whilst the proposals to change the system for processing complaints (to introduce a system whereby a complaint is initially made to a Local Standards Committee rather than the Standards Board for England) is anticipated to come into effect in 2008. It is expected that further information in respect of these developments

will be provided at the forthcoming annual assembly of Standards Committees (see below). Further updates will be provided in this Bulletin. However, for up to date information we recommend that you visit the Standards Board website at www.standardsboard.co.uk.

Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees

The fifth annual assembly of Standards Committees is due to take place on 16th and 17th October 2006 at the ICC, Birmingham. This year's assembly is entitled "Bridging the gap towards effective local regulation" and will include speeches by Sir Anthony Holland, the chair of the Standards Board for England, and Phil Woolas MP, Minister for Local Government. It is anticipated that the assembly will look at both the changing role for the Standards Board of England as it looks to change to become a strategic regulator, and the increasing responsibility that will be placed upon Local Authorities in respect of processing complaints under the system for local filtration which is expected to be in place from 2008. Representatives from both the Borough of Telford and Wrekin and the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority will be in attendance. Sue Kembrey, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin has been invited to speak at a presentation and discussion session on local investigations.

If you wish to find out more information about the assembly, you can do so by visiting www.annualassembly.co.uk. We also expect transcripts of some the speeches provided at the assembly to appear afterwards on the Standards Board website at www.standardsboard.co.uk.

Register of Interest Forms

Thank you to all councillors who have completed and returned new Register of Interest forms. For those who have not yet returned their forms, there is still an opportunity to do so, if you have any queries with regard to the content of the forms, then please do not hesitate to contact the relevant officers names at the end of this Bulletin. Parish and Town Councillors should speak to their local Parish/Town Clerk. In any event, we take the opportunity to remind all members that even if you do complete an up-to-date form every 12 months, there is still an obligation under the Code of Conduct to amend the details on the form within 28 days of any relevant change in circumstances.

Code of Conduct Training

Code of Conduct training for Councillors has now concluded, with three sessions having taken place in June this year. There were a total of 75 attendees for the three sessions, which included Borough Councillors, Parish and Town Councillors, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority members, Parish/Town Council Clerks and other officers. Generally, the feedback from the training was positive, but our aim is to make improvements for subsequent training, and also encourage a higher attendance, particularly from Parish and Town Councillors. This is particularly important if there are changes to the Code of Conduct, as it will be crucial that all Councillors have access to good quality training on the changes to the existing rules. If you have any suggestions for ways in which the training can be made more accessible, particularly for Parish and Town Councillors, then we would welcome your comments (which can be provided to the officers whose details appear at the end of this Bulletin).

Next Bulletin

The next Bulletin is due to be issued during Winter 2006/07. If you have any comments with regard to this Bulletin, or suggestions or items to be included in the next edition of the Bulletin, then please contact Matthew Cumberbatch (on 01952 203068 or matthew.cumberbatch@telford.gov.uk), or for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, members please contact Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority on 01743 260210.

CONTACTS

Sue Kembrey – Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
-01952 202461

Roger Woliter – Deputy Monitoring Officer 01952 202565

Phil Smith – Senior Democratic Services Officer (Borough of Telford and Wrekin) - 01952 202446

Sharon Lloyd – Corporate Services Manager for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority - 01743 260210

Matthew Cumberbatch – Group Solicitor, Standards and Regulations Team, Legal and Democratic Services (Borough of Telford and Wrekin) 01952 203068 (email matthew.cumberbatch@telford.gov.uk)