

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Standards Committee

17th May 2010

1. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ENGAGING WITH AUTHORITIES

Report of the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members note the contents of the report and consider any issues for the Authority.

THAT the contents of the report and the views of the Standards Committee be presented at a future Policy Planning meeting to facilitate wider awareness and discussion within the Authority.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to bring to Members' attention proposals made by Standards for England for the regulation of local arrangements relating to standards.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In the recently published Regulatory Statement Standards for England has outlined its regulatory outcomes:

- That there are high standards of conduct among members in local authorities.
- That there is an effective and proportionate standards framework in operation.

- 3.2 There are some details now emerging about what future regulation may entail. The proposals include categorisation based on high, medium or low risk and there is some detail about the criteria to be used in arriving at these ratings. The outline proposals are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

- 3.3 It is anticipated that there will be some piloting or testing of this regulatory mechanism. It is also hoped that there will be full

consultation with indication of the Authority's likely categorisation.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Standards Board for England is established under the Local Government Act 2000. It has overall responsibility for the standards framework. It provides guidance to authorities and acts as a strategic regulator also. It has recently begun to further define its regulatory role with the publication of the Regulatory Statement and these proposals.
- 5.2 It is important for the Authority to have a good rating as otherwise there could be legal and reputational risk to the Authority.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is likely that increased regulation will result in some increased resources being spent although these are unlikely to be significant for the authority. Until now the regulatory system was mainly reactive with quarterly and annual returns being made by the Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Authority. It will now need more work by the Monitoring Officer, the Standards Committee and the Authority.

N SHARMA
MONITORING OFFICER