

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

5th MARCH, 2007

1. **'GOING LOCAL: INVESTIGATIONS AND HEARINGS'**

Joint report of the Clerk and the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

(1) THAT the report be noted.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is to raise Members' awareness of the processes around local investigations and hearings.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Standards Board for England has produced a guidance DVD to support monitoring officers and Standards Committees in their work in investigating cases concerning potential breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct. The DVD uses a fictional case to illustrate a local investigation and hearing and highlights some of the challenges that may arise.

3.2 Arrangements have been made for the Committee to view the DVD at this meeting, and to use the programme as a tool for discussion. The purpose of the DVD is not to examine the detail of the fictional complaint but to identify how to carry out a fair and balanced local investigation and the best procedure for a professional and effective hearing.

4. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out, as the matters contained in this report will not lead to and do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The conduct of investigations and hearings into alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct is governed by the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination) Regulations 2003. The Standards Board of England also offers additional guidance on these matters.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

**NEERAJ SHARMA
MONITORING OFFICER**

**SUSAN PHELPS
CLERK**