

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Standards Committee

6th September 2010

1. DECENTRALISM AND LOCALISM BILL

Report of the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Standards Committee note the contents of the report and consider any immediate and future issues for the Authority.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to Members' attention the recently published Decentralism and Localism Bill and to enable Members to consider any implications, immediate and future, for the Authority.
- 2.2 Particular attention should be drawn to the proposal in the Bill to abolish the Standards Board regime. It is not yet known how this will affect Standards Committees, the Members Code of Conduct and ethical governance more generally.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In the Queen's Speech the new government set out its proposal for 'The Decentralism and Localism Bill'. Details of the main elements can be found attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 The Decentralism and Localism Bill will give local councils more powers over housing and planning decisions and begin a review of local government finance.
- 3.3 One of its proposals is to 'abolish the Standards Board regime'. Little detail is given, however, in regards to its scope, implications or timeframe. As such the current statutory framework remains operative and we have a duty to follow the framework as set out by legislation and the Standards Board. Attached at Appendix 2 is a letter received from Standards for England Chair Dr Robert Chilton, and Appendix 3, a press statement from Standards for England on the proposed legislation.

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 by section 57 of the Local Government Act 2000. Standards for England has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the standards framework. It operates as the national advisor and the strategic regulator. The new government is at liberty to alter this Act if and how it so wishes.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There is no immediate direct effect from the report although the implementation of the proposal to abolish the Standards Board regime would reduce the resources needed for such a framework.

N SHARMA
MONITORING OFFICER