

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1)
on Friday, 3rd November, 2006 at 2.30 p.m.**

ITEM		PAGE
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 30th June, 2006 (copy herewith).	1
3.	Declarations of Interest (if any)	
4.	Ethical Audit Report of the City Solicitor (copy herewith).	5
5.	Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees Report of the City Solicitor (copy herewith).	17

R.C. RAYNER,
City Solicitor.

Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

26th October, 2006.

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At a meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on FRIDAY, 30TH JUNE, 2006 at 1.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Mr. G.N. Cook in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, M. Forbes, Peter Maddison, Mann and L. Scott together with Mr. J.P. Paterson.

Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wandless (Hetton Town Council).

Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed the new Members to the Committee, namely Councillors Charlton, Peter Maddison and L. Scott.

Members and Officers of the Committee proceeded to introduce themselves to Ms. Lynn Hunt and Mr. Jim Dafer from the Audit Commission, who were attending the meeting as part of the process for the Ethical Governance Audit.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th February, 2006 (copy circulated) were submitted.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed and agreed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Variation of Agenda

The Chairman moved that the agenda be varied to consider the reports on the use of computer facilities and the protocol for the use of Member Websites at the start of the meeting in order to receive a demonstration of the e-Government democracy suite.

2. RESOLVED that the agenda be varied accordingly.

Councillors' Use of Computer Facilities

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) proposing a review of the Council's current protocol on Councillors' Use of Computer Facilities in the light of the proposed roll out of broadband, the e-Government agenda and Councillor blogs.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The City Solicitor briefed the Committee on the report referring to the e-Government Agenda and the ODPM priority outcomes. He advised that he was proposing a revision of the protocol on the use of computer facilities to permit personal use of e-mail and the internet in accordance with strict conditions in order to encourage Members to use their computer facilities.

The City Solicitor highlighted that it was proposed that ICT services would create a separate user account with a different name and e-mail address from the Councillors' official details. He also pointed out the safeguards for the use of Council ICT equipment detailed in paragraph 2 of the report.

In response to Members' enquiries, the City Solicitor advised that Members might be asked to pay a small monthly fee in order to cover the cost of the personal usage of the computer facilities and that by having separate e-mail addresses, this would ensure there was a clear separation of personal and Council usage. He added that, should an easier way in which to separate the usage become available, through discussions with colleagues from ICT other than having two separate e-mail addresses, then this would be developed. However if a Member inadvertently used the wrong site for personal use then they would need to report the matter to the Council's ICT Department.

The Chairman commented that Members had been nervous of using Council computer facilities and enquired whether the arrangements would make them more comfortable in returning to using Council equipment.

Councillor L. Scott commented that some Members had purchased their own computer equipment and preferred to use them to access Council services.

Councillor Charlton commented that not all Members would wish to purchase their own computer and that he saw the new arrangements as a compromise. The proposal to introduce a small charge for personal use would make Members feel more comfortable.

The City Solicitor advised that those Members who used their own equipment were entitled to a reasonable allocation of consumables from the Council to cover the cost related to Council work.

Members welcomed the proposal to encourage the use of IT equipment and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that approval be given to making a change in the protocol in principle and that the City Solicitor be instructed to prepare a revised protocol for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

Protocol for Use of Member Websites

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) providing a proposed protocol intended to govern Members' use of dedicated individual websites provided and administered by the Council, highlighting some areas of risk and proposals for managing these.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The City Solicitor introduced the report and referred the Committee to the draft protocol attached at Appendix A.

The e-Democracy Project Manager provided the Committee with a demonstration of a Member Website that was under development.

The City Solicitor advised that Officers in his service would be responsible for screening material provided by the Member, before it was uploaded onto the Members' individual site, to ensure the information was compliant with the protocol. He advised that should Members request a link from their website to their blog or another site, technical arrangements would be put in place to ensure that the user of the site was advised that they were leaving the Council's website. Officers would liaise with Councillors on an individual basis to determine what information they would like to include on their Council Website.

In response to Councillor M. Forbes, the City Solicitor advised that proposals for additional resources in Members Services to enhance the necessary office support would be submitted to the Corporate Head of Personnel. These staff would undertake the editing and uploading of information for Councillors' Websites together with the services already provided.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the protocol attached at Appendix A be adopted, to apply to each Member's use of the facility, which will not be made available to any Member until they have accepted and returned a signed copy of the protocol to the City Solicitor;
- (ii) a link to a Members' private blog be offered subject to the technical safeguards outlined in the report; and
- (iii) a link to another site or sites on subjects likely to be of interest to readers of the site also be offered subject to the same technical safeguards.

Ethical Governance Audit – Draft Specification

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) providing further information on the Ethical Audit which is being undertaken by the Audit Commission and which had commenced in May and inviting Members to give consideration to any other matters that they felt needed to be included in the audit, which could be added to the scope of the review.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hunt, District Auditor advised that the results of the Survey and Ethical Audit would be reported to the Committee upon completion.

5. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

(Signed) G.N. COOK,
Chairman.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 NOVEMBER 2006

ETHICAL AUDIT

Report of the City Solicitor

1. INTRODUCTION

Members will recall that at the meeting held on 30 June 2006 they noted the contents of a report outlining the draft specification for an Ethical Audit, and agreed this should be undertaken by an independent body – the Audit Commission.

2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Members will recall that the aim of the audit is to assess how well the Council:

- Is complying with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000;
- Is ensuring that the Standards Committee has access to the right information and support to enable it to do its job properly.

And whether:

- Members and officers have an understanding/awareness of ethical issues;
- Members are abiding by the code of conduct; and
- Members and officers training needs in this area.

3. AUDIT APPROACH

The Audit comprised:

- a document review;
- focus groups with a range of officers and members; and
- a survey of members and key officers.

4. PERFORMANCE REPORT

A full copy of the report "Setting High Ethical Standards – Local Government Diagnostic Report" is attached. In addition representatives of the Audit Commission will attend the meeting to give a presentation on the matter.

5. SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions are summarised below:

- High ethical standards and the links with improving the delivery of council business has been a focus for the Council in recent years.
- Elected members and officers see strong ethical governance as a key component driving the improvement of the Council. Governance processes are well established.
- There is a high level of awareness of the Council's Standards Committee (SC) and the type of work the Committee does across the Council.
- The code of conduct is well-understood by members and officers and extensive training has been provided. Members and officers mostly work well together.
- There have been a number of referrals to the SBE but the number is not out of line with other councils. Members and officers are well-prepared for local investigations.
- Doing the right thing for the right people in the right way is an important priority for the Council.
- The Council will want to ensure that its governance processes are kept under close review to ensure that they are meeting changing circumstances.
- The Council Leader is seen as an extremely positive role model and proactively promotes the importance of the ethical agenda. The Chief Executive is also seen as a good role model, and along with the Monitoring Officer is highly respected.
- The Council takes extremely seriously the need to promote confidence in local democracy.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members are invited to note the contents of the report and receive the presentation.
- 6.2 Members may wish to consider how best they may publicise that the work of the Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment.

Setting High Ethical Standards - Local Government Diagnostic Report

**Sunderland City Council
Audit 2006/2007**

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve high-quality local and national services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money every year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, criminal justice and fire and rescue services.

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Introduction and background

- 1 There is an increased emphasis on the need for the highest standards of conduct in public life. The findings of Nolan and Graham Committees, the Local Government Act 2000, the introduction of the Standards Board for England (TSBE), and the inclusion of an ethics component in the Comprehensive Assessment (CA) 2005 are all factors in the current weight being given to the need for strong ethical governance in local councils.
- 2 High ethical standards are the cornerstone of good governance. They are an integral part of good corporate governance arrangements, can lead to increased confidence in local democracy and help an authority to attain a high CA rating.
- 3 Setting high ethical standards is an important building block for councils in developing their community leadership role and improving services to the community. Councils are also becoming involved in increasingly complex partnership and a decline in high standards may adversely affect these arrangements.
- 4 Local authorities and individual members now face a number of risks which may include:
 - referral to, and investigation by, the Standards Board for England for alleged breaches of the code of conduct, sometimes leading to the disqualification of members;
 - loss of confidence in individual members, councils and local democracy; and
 - poor decision-making.
- 5 Ethical governance is an area of great interest to the national and local press, particularly when things go wrong. On average one councillor a week is removed from office because of breaches of the code of conduct ranging from bullying behaviour, misuse of council resources, bringing the Council into disrepute and using their position as a councillor for personal gain. Other sanctions have included formal censure, and suspension from using council facilities. When things go wrong and councillors are found guilty of a breach of the code of conduct, there is a risk to the reputation of individuals and the council. The consequent difficulties of having to implement widespread changes whilst under the spotlight cannot be overestimated.
- 6 One of the common aspects of governance failures is not the absence of frameworks, controls and arrangements but the absence of appropriate behaviours and values amongst members and officers. This audit therefore looks at your compliance with statutory requirements as well as behaviour, culture and values.

- 7 It is some years since the ethical arrangements in place at the Council were subject to external challenge. Since then the ethical agenda has moved on at pace and it was in this context that the Audit Commission was asked to undertake an ethical governance diagnostic to provide an in-depth assessment of how well the Council was doing in this area.

Scope and objectives

- 8 The aim of this work was to help assess how well the Council:
- is complying with part III of the Local Government Act 2000; and
 - is ensuring that the Standards Committee has access to the right information and support to enable it to do its job properly.

And whether:

- members and officers have an understanding and awareness of ethical issues;
- members are abiding by the code of conduct; and
- members and officers have training needs in this area.

Audit approach

- 9 To complete the audit we undertook
- a document review;
 - held focus groups with a range of officers and members; and
 - a survey of members and key officers.

Main conclusions

Summary

- 10 High ethical standards and the links with improving the delivery of council business has been a focus for the Council in recent years.
- 11 Elected members and officers see strong ethical governance as a key component driving the improvement of the Council. Governance processes are well-established.
- 12 There is a high level of awareness of the Council's Standards Committee (SC) and the type of work the Committee does across the Council, with over 90% of respondents being aware of the role of the SC. The Council's SC is proactive and independent. It has a high profile in the Council and a wide remit. It helps to keep the ethical agenda in the forefront of the Council's thinking. However, over 40% of officers were unaware if the SC was making a positive difference to the ethical environment of the Council.

- 13 The code of conduct is well-understood by members and officers and extensive training has been provided. Members and officers mostly work well together.
- 14 There have been a number of referrals to the SBE but the number is not out of line with other councils. Members and officers are well-prepared for local investigations and determinations.
- 15 Doing the right thing for the right people in the right way is an important priority for the Council. Increasing dialogue with the community and involving the Council's partners and diverse community more in decision-making is seen as a real opportunity to further improve the Council. However, this approach brings risks. The Council will want to ensure that its governance processes are kept under close review to ensure that they are meeting changing circumstances. All members and staff will need to be appropriately skilled to meet the challenges the Council will continue to face.
- 16 The Council Leader is seen as an extremely positive role model and proactively promotes the importance of the ethical agenda. The Chief Executive is also seen as a good role model, and along with the Monitoring Officer is highly respected.
- 17 The Council takes extremely seriously the need to promote confidence in local democracy. This is borne out by 100% of members and over 65% of members agreeing that this is the case.

The Standards Committee

- 18 The Council's SC fully meets statutory requirements and was established well before the statutory deadline.
- 19 The Committee consists of six elected members and two independent members. The independent members were appointed using the Council's rigorous selection framework. The committee operates independently of the Council and political party machinery. It is chaired by one of the independent members. This brings additional autonomy.
- 20 The independent members are playing a full and increasingly important role and are well-informed about council business. They are respected and their significant role in the Council's improvement journey is understood by them, by other members and by officers.
- 21 The Council's SC is a key committee and has a high profile. Its role is well understood by both members and officers. The terms of reference of the committee comply with statutory requirements and are included in the Council's Constitution. However, over 40% of officers did not know if the SC was making a positive difference to the ethical environment of the Council.
- 22 The SC is working effectively to promote a healthy ethical environment. It is making clear direct links between raising standards across the Council, the diversity agenda and the ethical agenda. The SC has a brief which enables it to obtain a wide overview and understanding of council policy and practice, to plan its work, to take action and then to make recommendations accordingly.
- 23 The importance of high ethical standards is effectively communicated to members, staff and local communities. Clear written guidance has been produced by the Monitoring Officer on how the different elements of the ethical agenda link together through the Council's governance framework. The Council's newspaper, Sunrise, sent to all households, gives coverage to wide range of ethical issues.

Recommendation

R1 The Council should decide how best they publicise that the work of the Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment.

Code of conduct

- 24 The Council's has had a member code of conduct in place for a number of years. The code complies with statutory requirements and has been signed by all elected and co-opted members. The code, together with the member/officer protocol, provides clear guidance on expected member behaviour.
- 25 The code of conduct is easily available on the Council's website.

- 26 Officers and members appear to work well together to achieve the Council's common goals. In addition, Officers and members understand their respective roles in achieving these goals.
- 27 The Council has had a number of referrals to the SBE but the number is not out of line with that of other similar councils.
- 28 The misuse of council property by elected members is no longer an issue in the Council, although the Council did refer a case to the Standards Board a year ago. The Council is taking appropriate action to ensure that there is clarity about the use of IT and no misuse of council computers by members.

Training and information

- 29 An extensive range of training has been provided for members on ethical issues at regular intervals since 2002. Officers at all levels receive regular and clear information and guidance on ethical issues through training, newsletters, briefings and staff meetings. However, implementation of this guidance in practice may vary between Council directorates.

Recommendation

R2 The Council should ensure that the guidance and training provided on ethical issues is consistently applied in practice across all directorates.

Local investigations and hearings

- 30 The Council has in place clear guidelines upon which to carry out local investigations. Currently the Council do not have any ongoing local investigations.
- 31 There have been three referrals from the Standards Board in the past 18 months. These cases have been determined in line with good practice by the Standards Committee.

Register of interests

- 32 The register of interests meets statutory requirements. The public can access and inspect the members' register of interest. There have been no recent cases of members not declaring their personal or prejudicial interests appropriately.
- 33 Individual guidance is readily available for members from the Monitoring Officer and his staff if members are at all unclear about their own personal and prejudicial interests.

The Monitoring Officer

- 34 The Monitoring Officer is effective and well-respected within the Council and has helped to drive the ethical agenda to the core of council business. This has

ensured that all members and officers understand the clear links between high ethical standards and high standards of council business.

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

- 35 The Leader of the Council is seen as proactive in promoting the importance of the ethical agenda and is considered to be a positive role model.
- 36 The Chief Executive is also considered to be an effective role model, who has made a significant contribution to changing the culture of the Council and promoting a more open management style. The Chief Executive continues to place great importance on the link between the high ethical standards and the improvement of council services.

Promoting confidence in local democracy

- 37 The Council is actively promoting confidence in local democracy by improving dialogue with stakeholders, by showing that it is listening, by encouraging wider participation in local democracy, by taking complaints seriously and by providing better and more appropriate services.
- 38 The Council's newspaper 'Sunrise', delivered to every door is its main channel of communication with residents.

The way forward

- 39 The findings and recommendations of the report were discussed with the Monitoring Officer and the Council's leadership in October 2006. The Council then considered the detailed report and the recommendations that arose from it. The action plan which is included with this report outlines the actions that the Council has agreed to take to strengthen its current arrangements.
- 40 The Council will need to ensure that the approved recommendations are implemented and followed through in a timely manner.
- 41 We would like to thank both members and officers for all their interest in this work, for their time and perspectives and for all the supporting information they provided for this review. We hope that this works helps to move the Council to the next stage of its development.

Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	R1 The Council should decide how best they publicise that the work of the Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment.	2	Monitoring Officer	Agreed	This will be considered with the Head of Corporate Communications	Within 3 months
8	R2 The Council should ensure that the guidance and training provided on ethical issues is consistently applied in practice across all directorates.	2	Monitoring Officer/All Chief Officers	Agreed	A programme will be prepared in conjunction with other Directors of briefings at Strategic Management Team and other Directorate Team meetings. This will be rolled out and monitored.	Within 3 months

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 NOVEMBER 2006

FIFTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Report of the City Solicitor

1. Introduction

This year's assembly was again held in Birmingham on 16th/17th October. It followed the usual format of a number of plenary sessions attended by all delegates and options for attending various workshops.

This report highlights the main themes and issues raised.

2. Strategic Direction – Sir Tony Holland

Sir Tony Holland is to continue to act as Chair of the Standards Board until 2008. In a brief introduction he indicated that the Board would be relocating to Manchester next April. The Board would be moving to a new role as a strategic regulator with more work being undertaken locally in future.

3. The New White Paper – Phil Woolas MP

Mr Woolas advised that the new White Paper would be issued in a few weeks time.

In summary, he said the paper will be devolutionary and look to empower local government, councillors and local people – and that the standards regime must follow.

The Code of Conduct is a vital element of the more locally-based framework and the minister stated that the consultation on a revised draft Code will be issued very shortly. The new Code, which resulted from a review by the Standards Board, will be in place for the local elections on 3 May 2007.

For the new system to work effectively, the capacity and capability of monitoring officers and standards committees to carry out their new roles must develop.

“The [new] Code will be user-friendly, fair and proportionate – in fact, a reflection of the conduct regime itself as it should be”.

This means having the right training, development and guidance in place for both officers and members, and this important role will continue to be delivered by the Standards Board. To help retain public confidence, the minister said standards committees should have an independent chair, but should not be required to have a majority of independent members. Maintaining a balance of members, including those with a representative role, helps to ensure local democratic ownership.

The minister recognised concerns about resource implications of the new regime and the need for monitoring officers to be robust and consistent, resisting political pressure. He added that he wants to see authorities cooperate and work together. His speech ended by asking delegates to step up and meet the challenges facing them in the months ahead.

4. Bridging the Gap – Patricia Hughes

4.1 Patricia Hughes, Deputy Chair of the Standards Board provided information on case handling in 2005/06 as follows:-

In 2005/6

- 3,836 complaints were received.
- 687 complaints referred for investigation.
- 57 standards committee hearings took place.
- 77 cases were presented by the Standards Board to the Adjudication Panel for a hearing.

68% of cases are now dealt with at a local level.

4.2 Local Allegations in 2005:

- District Council's averaged five allegations each.
- County, unitary and metropolitan borough councils averaged six allegations each.
- 15% of district councils had no allegations.
- 34% of county, unitary and metropolitan borough councils had no allegations.
- 551 parish and town councils averaged three allegations each.

4.3 The range of standards committee sanctions went from suspension of three months in 19 cases, through to censure in 18 instances, and the current year has seen greater use of other sanctions such as imposition of additional training. All of this struck her as a healthy indicator of local decision-making at work.

During the year, 77 cases were presented by the Standards Board to the Adjudication Panel for England and a finding secured in 69 of those cases. Sanctions were imposed on 64 members. This is, of course, only a tiny proportion of those complaints received.

4.4 On Local Investigations and hearings she advised that:

- Overall they were going well.
- Some difficulties were experienced.
- More guidance and support planned.

4.5 The Challenges ahead were:

- Local filter – making it work.
- Balance between local discretion and consistency.

- Revised Code of Conduct.

She was hopeful that legislation providing for the local filter will be in place by summer 2007 and the system in operation by 2008.

The Standards Board is already adjusting the focus of its work away from the volume of cases they investigate and towards the provision of a stronger framework of support. An example is the training DVD – Going Local – investigations and hearings – which was released in January 2006.

They will continue to monitor the national picture to help assess the impact of the system on standards and to identify good practice.

They are also concerned about potential conflicts of interest that may arise when the system operate under the new local framework. For example, will a conflict arise if those taking the decision to refer a case, later hear the case? They believe that this can be dealt with by sub-committees, rather than the whole standards committee.

4.6 In conclusion, the Standards Board for England's role is seen as:

- Increasingly strategic.
- Investigating the vital few serious cases.
- Ensuring public confidence in the system.

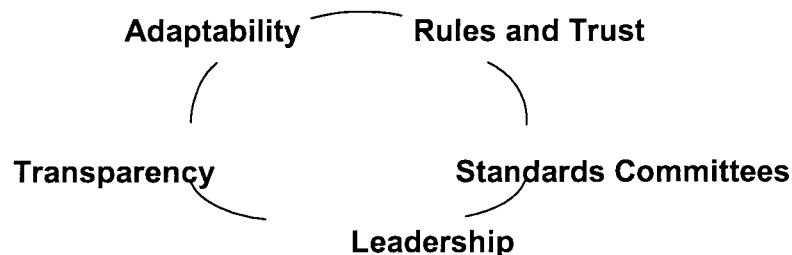
5. **What will an effective ethical environment look like?**

This session comprised presentations by Frances Done, Managing Director – Local Government, Audit Commission.

Barry Quirk, Chief Executive, London Borough of Lewisham and Immediate Past President, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers.

Professor Gerry Stoker, Institute for Political and Economic Governance, University of Manchester.

Gerry Stoker felt that the vital components in a virtuous circle were as shown below.



His main messages were:

- Prevention rather than cure.

- An ethical environment is based on trust, what makes the difference is the informal enforcement occurring on a daily basis.

Standards Committees were of 3 types:

Lapdog – politicised or disengaged

Watchdog – reactive (rules and enforcement)

Guidedog – rules and enforcement plus guidance and proactive support.

Leadership requires:

- Mediation, enforcement and resolution
- Role modelling
- Maintaining ethical profile
- Supporting credibility of standards committee and monitoring officer

Transparency:

- Support 'after the event' examination which deters misconduct.

Adaptability:

Rules, systems and culture can adapt to changing circumstances for example:

- Partnership working
- New localism

Francis Done (Audit Commission)

Ms Done stated Ethical governance is examined through:

- The resources assessment (annually).
- CPA Corporate Governance inspections.
- Key factor is member – officer relations.
- Values and behaviour most important.

She referred to the ethical governance diagnostic tool comprising:

- Web based survey of members and senior managers.
- Audit of arrangements.
- Workshop focussed on specific issues.

Generally, she felt:

- There was a good level of understanding of LGA 2000.
- Some Councils are more proactive.
- Members more positive than senior managers about position at Council.

Post 2008

- A new assessment regime of local service in an area not just the Council. Ethical governance a key factor in assessing risk.

Barry Quirk: Chief Executive of Lewisham

Conduct is the key not what leaders say. Need to promote civility and co-operation in political and public dialogue.

Benefits of a positive ethical atmosphere – performance is improved.
Leaders need to create the right climate.

6. Monitoring Officer Group – Implications of the impending changes:

These were considered to be:

- Resources should be shifted from Board to Monitoring Officers.
- Suggested help-line for Parish Councillors.
- Protection for staff doing investigations as well as Monitoring Officers.
- Consistency will be harder to achieve if cases are filtered locally.
- Prospects of more conflicts for Monitoring Officers.
- Referral system will involve more officers – different members and could prove unwieldy.
- Where do mediation and local settlements fit in with the referrals process?
- Doubts as to whether revised code will be issued in time.
- Software package to test members on training advocated.

7. Survey Results

The outcome of the Standards Board was provided as follows:

- 1,308 questionnaires completed.
- Members: average age 62 - 75% male - 25% 5 years experience or more
- Monitoring Officers: average age 50 - 60% male - 92% Solicitors
- 62% of Monitoring Officers are Members of their Council's Corporate Management Team

Monitoring Officers' experience:

37% 1 – 5 years
22% 5 – 8 years
22% More than 10 years

Summary - Perceived Positive Impacts of the new Conducts Regime

- Monitoring Officers – generally perceive themselves as supported and valued.
- Generally good relations between Monitoring Officers, Standards Chairmen and other Chief Officers.
- Improved behaviour had resulted.
- Improvements in openness and transparency.

Difficulties:

- Need more support and resources for workload.
- Support tools required as Standards Board assumes regulatory role.

8. Conclusion

As always some of the presentations were more useful than others. The workshops provided a useful forum to exchange ideas and compare experiences.

Unfortunately, important information was not available to the Conference delegates namely, the draft revised Code of Conduct and the White Paper with details of how the local filtering of complaints by Standards Committees will work.

9. Recommendation

That members note the contents of this report.