

Report of	Meeting	Date
Monitoring Officer	Standards Committee	5 June 2008

## UPDATE FROM THE LANCASHIRE STANDARDS CONFERENCE

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update the Standards Committee on the Lancashire Standards Conference held in March 2008.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To note the report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- During the morning session Paul Hoey from the Standards Board for England gave a presentation on the local filter - new Regulations and guidance and answered questions from those Councils in attendance. This was followed by a group discussion and workshops, lead by Lancashire County Council, on possible models for joint working.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	✓
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

### BACKGROUND

- This was the second Lancashire Standards Conference event held at Woodlands hosted by Lancashire County Council. Representatives of the majority of authorities in Lancashire attended the event.

### SESSION WITH PAUL HOEY

- Paul advised that the new Regulations were expected to come into force on 1 May 2008, followed by Regulations regarding joint working arrangements in June.
- Those authorities that had taken part in the pilot scheme had referred a higher percentage of allegations for investigation in comparison to the Standards Board for England, although it was noted that this was consistent across the pilot authorities. There would be provision in the Regulations for informal mediation by the Monitoring Officer.

8. Paul outlined the process and highlighted that Standards Committees would determine their own criteria against which it assesses new complaints and decides what action, if any, to take.
9. There would be sub-committees to: i, assess new complaints, ii, review decisions to take no action over a complaint and iii, consider determination hearings. Guidance from the Standards Board was that Standards Committee members could assess new complaints and then consider determination hearings.
10. The Standards Board would have the role to define and monitor the framework. This would ensure public confidence that complaints against Councillors were being dealt with fairly and consistently. Each authority would be required to complete a return to the Standards Board on a quarterly basis. Benchmarking information and best practice would be available from this.
11. Paul advised that guidance would be produced on all aspects of the new Regulations as soon as practicable. There were several areas where further guidance was needed, including, cases where a Councillor was a member on more than one authority.

### **DISCUSSION ON JOINT WORKING**

12. Options for joint working were highlighted in a presentation from Lancashire County Council. This was followed by group workshop sessions to discuss the options.
13. There was support, in principle, for Independent Members to sit on Committees for more than one authority. It was agreed that officers across the County would consider the criteria for referral.
14. Further options for joint working would be considered at a later time.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

15. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	No significant implications in this area	

ANDREW DOCHERTY  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Ruth Hawes	515118	27 March 2008	LancsStandardsConfUpdateJune08