

31 JANUARY 2006

**“STANDARDS OF CONDUCT IN ENGLISH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT : THE FUTURE” -
ODPM DISCUSSION PAPER**

ALL WARDS

The attached discussion paper contains the Government's response to the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Graham Committee), the ODPM Select Committee on Standards, and the Standards Board for England's recommendations on the review of the members' Code of Conduct.

The discussion paper also addresses an earlier ODPM consultation on whether to introduce a Code of Conduct for local government employees similar to that of the members' Code.

The Government proposes to make the following amendments to the existing Standards regime, although no date has yet been given for when these changes will take effect:

- Initial assessment of all misconduct allegations to be undertaken by local Standards Committees, rather than the Standards Board;
- Local Standards Committees to be responsible for investigating and determining most cases;
- The Standards Board to investigate only the most serious cases, becoming more strategic and advisory;
- Improvements to the composition of local Standards Committees, to include mandatory independent Chairs, and more independent members with a balance of experience (already complied with at LBHF);
- A clearer, simpler Code of Conduct, including changes to the rules relating to personal and prejudicial interests, bullying, conduct in private life, and amendment of the rules on reporting allegations to reduce the number of vexatious complaints made by members.

The Government also proposes to issue a complementary statutory Code of Conduct for local government employees which would parallel that already in existence for members.

CONTRIBUTORS **RECOMMENDATION:**

ACE (P&P)

That the changes proposed by the Government to the Code of Conduct and the current Standards regime be noted.