

# METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 1 APRIL 2003

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## TRAINING - STANDARDS BOARD CONFERENCE AND COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION TRAINING

### 1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the second annual assembly of standards committees, seek appropriate representation and identify items for training for members of the Standards Committee regarding the local investigation of complaints.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Standards Board for England is holding an annual assembly of standards committees in Birmingham on 9 and 10 June this year at the International Conference Centre. The assembly provides an opportunity for members of standards committees and officers to come together to discuss the practical implementation of members' code of conduct, the implications of regulations covering local investigation and determination of complaints and building confidence in local democracy. The conference will discuss the new regulations around determination of local complaints and there will be various different workshop sessions trying to deal with the practical issues around the code.
- 2.2 An advertisement for the conference is annexed to the report. Members are invited to consider representation at the conference. I would suggest that the Chair and party spokespersons on this committee consider attending together with the independent members should they so wish to do.
- 2.3 Following on from the assembly of standards committees, there will be I believe a need for more detailed training in relation to conducting investigations into complaints and the context of the new regulations once they arrive. I would suggest that this training is carried out externally as one of the key issues of standards committees as well as issues around investigation and hearings will also be the links and role of the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Standards Committee. I have discussed this matter with colleagues in Merseyside and they have indicated that there may be benefit in members from each of the authorities getting together for this training on the basis that as well as defraying costs, it will also enable members to discuss on a wider basis the issues they may face at standards committees, given that the size of these committees is relatively small. I have raised this issue with the Chair of the Standards Committee and she has suggested that I seek your views as to whether you would like me to arrange training purely for Wirral Standards Committee Members or that this be arranged in conjunction with members from the other Merseyside authorities including perhaps fire, Merseytravel and possible police if they are interested.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

The costs of training can be accommodated within the existing departmental and member training budgets.

4. Any other implications

There are none arising from this report.

5. Recommendation

That the Committee recommend appropriate representation to the Standards Board assembly in Birmingham and whether in depth training should take place on a Wirral or Merseyside basis.

JOHANNA MILLER  
Borough Solicitor and Secretary