

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 1 APRIL 2003

STANDARDS BOARD AND ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED TO DATE

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to give an analysis of the complaints of breach of the members code of conduct that have been received by the Standards Board, a brief indication of the nature of the complaint and its outcome. Members are asked to note the report.

2. Background

- 2.1 At Appendix 1 to this report, I have attached an analysis of 99 complaints which have been referred to the Standards Board together with their outcome. The information is taken from the published case summaries from the Standards Board. Members will see that the majority of cases are against parish councils. It is also fair to say that the majority of complaints have been made by Councillors against Councillors. The sample 99 complaints are fairly typical of those received by the Standards Board to date.
- 2.2 Currently the Standards Board has received over 2,700 complaints from the period April 2002 to February 2003. Forty-three per cent of those allegations have been made by fellow Councillors, 41% by Council employees and only 16% by others including the general public. Of the complaints received, 43% have been referred for investigation whilst 57% have not been referred for investigation - that is no further action is proposed.
- 2.3 The nature of the allegations referred to for investigation is mixed with 17% being referred for failure to register financial interests, 17% failure to register other interests, 16% bringing the Authority into disrepute, 18% failure to treat others with respect and the rest (37%) categorised as other. Of the complaints so far, 55% have been made against parish councils, 20% against district councils, and the remaining 25% against "other" - that is county, Metropolitan, Unitary and London Borough Authorities.
- 2.4 In relation to those cases that have currently been completed, 50% of those cases are decided as there having been no further action. However, this is misleading as in relation to those 50% of cases, some of those would have been referred for local adjudication by Standards Committees if the relevant regulations were in place. In addition to that, a further 25% showed no evidence of breach of the Code of Conduct and 25% were referred to the Adjudication Panel for further action. One member (of a parish council), has so far been disqualified by the Adjudication Panel.
- 2.5 The Standards Board posts the results of cases by way of case summary on its website and also a monthly digest of statistics and these can be found at www.standardsboard.co.uk. I would welcome members' views as to the usefulness or otherwise of this report. Members may wish to see a report similar to this on a regular basis.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

There are none arising from this report.

4. Any other implications

There are none arising from this report.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

JOHANNA MILLER
Borough Solicitor and Secretary