

Runnymede Borough Council  
STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE  
Tuesday 17 February 2004 at 7.30 p.m.  
in the Council Chamber  
at the Civic Offices, Addlestone



Members of the Committee

Councillors Ms C.M. Simmons (Chairman), A.P. Tollett (Vice-Chairman), E.G. Barrett, A.J. Davis, Mrs. E.E. Price; and Dr. R.F. Miller and Mrs. C. Spurling (Independent Members)

In accordance with Standing Order 29.2 any non-member of the Committee who is considering attending the meeting should first request the permission of the Chairman.

## **A G E N D A**

Notes:

- i) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- ii) The relevant "background papers" are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr. R.I. Langmead, Administration and Leisure Department, Committee Section, Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel. Direct Line: 01932 425610). (Email: [ian.langmead@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:ian.langmead@runnymede.gov.uk))**.
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr. B.A. Fleckney on 01932 425620.
- iv) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

## **LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **PART I**

#### **Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection**

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### **PART II**

#### **Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.**

a) Exempt Items

Appendix 'One' to Item 4, "Internal Audit".

b) Confidential Items

(No items to be considered under this heading).

1. MINUTES

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 September 2003.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at meetings.

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT (DF)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide information on the 2004/2005 Internal Audit plan;
- consider the future staffing provision of the Internal Audit section;
- update Members of any internal control issues arising from the first part of this year's audit coverage.

2. Background Information

2.1 On 26 June 1996 the Policy and Resources Committee approved a bi-annual reporting process. Since then, Members have been provided with two reports each year:

- i) one presenting the annual Internal Audit plan for approval (normally in November),
- ii) another reporting actual work performed compared to that plan (normally in June).

2.2 This Committee received the latter type of report in September 2003, relating to the 2002/2003 plan. This report presents the 2004/2005 plan.

3. The Internal Audit Plan

3.1 A copy of the 2004/2005 audit plan is reproduced at Appendix 'A'.

3.2 This document was drafted by the Chief Internal Auditor and finalised following consultation with Chief Officers and the Audit Commission.

3.3 The Internal Audit strategic plan was compiled for the period September 2000 to March 2004. That plan has been reviewed and rolled forward for another year. The Chief Internal Auditor intends to revisit the strategic plan in the coming year by:

- consulting Chief Officers regarding the current groupings of audit areas,
- considering how it might best be linked to the Risk Register,
- ensuring that the strategic risk assessment methodology as applied in previous years, is still relevant in its current form,
- determining the optimum length of the plan.

3.4 In summary, the annual plan is split as follows:

- 264 days allocated to carrying out systems based audit work to provide assurance on the Council's internal controls,
- 10 days for providing data for the identification of possible frauds and following up information supplied by the National Anti Fraud Network,
- 20 days to deal with the audit of contracts,
- 16 days for some year end work and to verify the Council's Performance Indicators,

- 50 days reserve for unforeseen work, and providing a consultancy service, and
  - 20 days computer audit.
- 3.5 No time has been allowed in the plan for assisting the Audit Commission auditors. Although a feature of previous Internal Audit plans, the external auditors have advised that this work (e.g. benefits subsidy work) now has to be carried out solely by themselves.
4. Future Staffing Provision of the Internal Audit Section
- 4.1 The Internal Audit section had until recently four audit posts; a Chief Internal Auditor, a Senior Auditor, an Auditor, and a part time ISO auditor. As reported in the Annual Personnel Report, the latter post has recently been deleted following the decision to discontinue most of the Council's ISO registrations.
- 4.2 The Auditor post is currently vacant, following the redeployment of the post holder who has only been able to work for 6 of the last 18 months due to two periods of extended sick leave.
- 4.3 The Senior Auditor post became vacant in September 2002 when the post holder obtained promotion by moving to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The subsequent post holder joined the section in November that year but left six months later to return to a job in taxation.
- 4.4 In view of the difficulty in attracting suitably qualified candidates, the post was readvertised as a trainee post on an extended grade and a graduate trainee was appointed last September. However, he decided to leave in December 2003 to pursue a career in the Civil Service.
- 4.5 The post was then offered to another candidate on the original shortlist, who commenced work in the section in December.
- 4.6 The above factors have had a detrimental affect on the delivery of the current year's audit plan.
- 4.7 To alleviate the situation, 85 audit days are being purchased from an external provider, ACIT Services, and a temporary member of staff has been arranged for a further five weeks, commencing in January 2004.
- 4.8 However, these measures will not be sufficient to complete the audit plan and it is currently anticipated that around six audits will be carried forward.
- 4.9 In order to provide continuity of service and to avoid the disruptions that have characterised internal audit in the past, Officers have considered alternative methods of provision. They conclude that the best option to ensure sufficient resources to deliver future audit plans yet retain some flexibility, is to substitute consultancy support for one of the audit posts. It is therefore proposed to increase the number of consultancy days from 30 to 130. The budgetary impact will be neutral.
- 4.10 The Chief Internal Auditor is therefore planning to draft a specification for external suppliers to provide quotes for approximately half of the section's work. The aim will be for a new contract to commence from April 2004. It is hoped that over the course of the next year, when the contract has been awarded and has had time to become established, and the new Trainee Auditor has gained more experience, that a more stable service provision will result.
5. Adequacy of Internal Control
- 5.1 There are two issues arising from audit work carried out so far this year that Members may wish to be aware of, both of which are being addressed by Officers.
- i) There have been communication problems between the Land Charges and Planning computer systems, which have resulted in at least one inaccurate search response. Land Charges staff manually checked information to Planning records for a period, while the two system suppliers worked to rectify the problem. One problem still remains, in that some determined applications show as 'undecided' on the Land Charges system. Land Charges staff are verifying such cases to the Planning system prior to releasing the search response.

- ii) Some departments have been issuing 'unofficial' invoices created on individual PCs, instead of passing information to the Finance Department to raise invoices through the Sundry Debtors system. This has both VAT and accounting implications for the Council. Officers are being instructed to use the Sundry Debtors system with immediate effect, and to supply details of all outstanding 'unofficial' invoices.

5.2 A copy of the ongoing list of recommendations and progress to date is attached as Exempt Appendix 'One' together with definitions of audit opinions.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

None stated

5. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (DF)

(Ref: Minutes of Standards and Audit Committee, September 2003, page 649, para. 320)

**1. Purpose of the report**

**1.1 To report progress in implementing the Council's Risk Management Strategy and compiling a risk register.**

**2. Background information**

2.1 At the last meeting of the Committee on 16 September 2003, the Committee approved a revised Risk Management Strategy. It was reported that consultants had been appointed to assist in the compilation of a risk register.

2.2 At the last meeting it was reported that the strategy required the Council to

- identify the risk of events occurring that will threaten the achievement of desired objectives;
- put controls in place to prevent these risks occurring or to mitigate the impact of these risks;
- document and prioritise the residual risks;
- produce an action plan to address any residual risks that are unacceptable;
- review the controls that are being operated;
- report to Committee at least annually on key risks and the way in which the strategy has been implemented.

**3. Report**

3.1 Since the last meeting, Officers have been working with Zurich Management Services to produce a register of the Council's corporate risks. This work has involved two workshops and interviews with ten senior staff across the organisation. The consultants' report and the register of risks is reproduced at Appendix 'B'.

3.2 There are 32 risks that have been identified and each has been scored against the matrix adopted by the Council in its Risk Management Strategy. Officers have also assessed the organisation's appetite for risk and this has been overlaid on the matrix. A diagram of the Council's risk profile, illustrating where each of the risks has been plotted on the matrix and their relationship to the Council's risk appetite, is shown on page 8 of the Appendix.

3.3 The following action is now required in response to this analysis.

- i) Compile an action plan for each of the risk clusters shown in the risk profile.
- ii) Identify a lead officer for each risk.
- iii) Establish protocols for controlling and monitoring the risks both corporately and departmentally.
- iv) Decide how this work will be developed to incorporate operational risks.
- v) Achieve Member buy-in to the process.

- 3.4 One of the key objectives of this exercise will be to reduce the risk exposure of the Council to those risks that lie outside its appetite for risk. Another will be to review those risks that have been identified as low impact and low likelihood to ensure that too many resources are not being devoted to the control of these risks.
- 3.5 The consultants have stressed that the work that has been undertaken so far will only be worthwhile if the Council adopts a risk management approach as part of its normal operation. Their assessment is that the Council is already doing much of this. It will be important to ensure that the process of risk management is not seen as a separate exercise and an additional burden but as part of the day to day management of the Authority. In order to ensure that the Council develops its risk management approach in a way that can be managed within existing resources, the consultants have advised that the Council should not attempt to expand the risk register to include departmental operational risks before it has learned to manage the corporate risk register in its present form. They have suggested that the Council should not seek to develop this further for at least twelve months.
- 3.6 In order to provide an appropriate high level focus on the corporate risks, it is proposed that the responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the risks should be undertaken by the Chief Officers Management Team.
- 3.7 Identified risks will be highlighted in Committee reports as appropriate.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

None

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS – RELEVANCE OF PERSONAL CAPACITY (DAL)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **To inform Members of a recent case bearing on the matter of whether a Member can speak in a personal capacity so as to override the normal interpretation of the Code of Conduct.**

2. The Facts and Judgment

- 2.1 The Court of Appeal has recently determined a case arising in North Yorkshire (Richardson and Orme v North Yorkshire County Council, Secretary of State and Brown and Others, 19 December 2003) in which argument was raised as to the meaning and extent of the model Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 Mr Richardson was a Member of North Yorkshire County Council, which had to determine a planning application for an extension of a quarry. His house was approximately 250 metres from the nearest point of extraction.
- 2.3 Mr Richard was not a Member of the Planning Committee, but wished to attend and speak at it. He was advised by Officers that he had a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct. He reluctantly accepted this and withdrew. He argued that not only was this wrong advice, but that even if it was right he should have been allowed to speak in a purely personal capacity.
- 2.4 The Council resolved to grant the planning permission, and the Councillor tried to have the decision quashed on judicial review. He raised a substantial argument on planning grounds but also argued that he should not have had to leave the meeting.
- 2.5 The Court of Appeal decided as follows:
- i) Regardless of the fact that he was not a Member of the Planning Committee, the Code of Conduct still applied to him in relation to the meeting.
  - ii) It would have been wrong to allow him to speak in his "personal" capacity. A Member cannot divest himself of his official capacity as a Councillor simply by declaring that he attends in his private capacity.

iii) Although it was up to the Member to decide whether he had a prejudicial interest, rather than the Committee or the Officers, Mr Richardson could not rationally have decided that he did not have a prejudicial interest.

2.6 The Court also said that in practical terms it was extremely difficult for a Councillor in such a position to separate points which he might wish to make in a personal capacity from points which he might argue in his official capacity as a Member, and this was borne out by the correspondence in the case. This lent weight to the conclusion that he could not properly speak in any capacity if he had a prejudicial interest.

### 3. Conclusion

3.1 The Court of Appeal decision does represent the law as this Council has understood and applied it. The point raised is naturally one of considerable interest and concern to Members, because in certain circumstances they are obliged to refrain from exercising rights which they would have were they not Members of the Council.

### **(FOR INFORMATION)**

#### Background Papers:

Lawtel report of above case.

## 7. DETERMINATION BY THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE OF ALLEGATIONS OF BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT (DAL) (Ref: Minutes of Standards and Audit Committee, September 2003, page 648, para. 318)

### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 **To seek approval for procedures to be adopted in the case of local investigations of complaints referred to the Standards and Audit Committee by an Ethical Standards Officer (ESO) employed by the Standards Board for England.**

### 2. Background Information

2.1 As reported to the Committee at its last meeting, the Government has now made the first part of the awaited Regulations under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000. These enable an ESO to refer allegations to a local authority's Standards Committee (via the Monitoring Officer) for local determination, once the ESO has completed an investigation of and report on the allegation.

2.2 Ethical Standards Officers will refer reports to Monitoring Officers where they consider that the matters raised are of an entirely local nature, or the misconduct is of such a nature that it would merit a sanction within the powers of a Standards Committee, rather than the heavier sanctions available to a Case Tribunal set up by the Adjudication Panel for England.

2.3 Further section 66 Regulations are expected. These will deal with the role of the Monitoring Officer (in this authority, the Director of Administration and Leisure) and in particular will enable an allegation to be referred down to the Monitoring Officer before investigation of the allegation is completed, so that the Monitoring Officer will then secure the investigation of the allegation and report to the Standards Committee.

2.4 The Committee had decided to await these further Regulations before approving procedures for local determination, and in the meantime had resolved to use the Standards Board's guidance as the basis of its procedures, with any necessary adaptation to a particular case. However the second set of section 66 Regulations is evidently delayed, and Officers now suggest that formal local procedures should be adopted. They can be revisited if necessary when the further Regulations appear.

### 3. Key Features of the Regulations

3.1 The Regulations were summarised to the last meeting of the Committee. The key points are repeated below:

- 3.2 A Standards Committee must generally meet in public but has the same powers of exclusion of public and press as other Committees of the Council. Public and press may be excluded in particular
- i) Where information relating to the personal circumstances of any person might be revealed;
  - ii) Where information which is subject to any obligation of confidentiality may be revealed;
  - iii) Where information which relates in any way to matters concerning national security may be revealed;
  - iv) During the deliberations of a Standards Committee in reaching any finding on a matter referred to it by the Ethical Standards Officer.
- 3.3 Following reference of a matter by an ESO:
- i) The Monitoring Officer has to send a copy of the ESO's report to the Member concerned and arrange a meeting of the Standards Committee;
  - ii) The Standards Committee has to convene to conduct a hearing between 14 days – 3 months from receipt of the ESO's report;
  - iii) The hearing has to be conducted "having regard to" any guidance issued by the Standards Board;
  - iv) The Member complained of must be given an opportunity to present evidence in support of his case;
  - v) The Member complained of must be given the opportunity to make representations orally or in writing and either in person or through Counsel, a solicitor or, if the Standards Committee agrees, any other person;
  - vi) The Standards Committee has power to establish its own procedure for the conduct of hearings;
  - vii) The Standards Committee may arrange for the attendance of witnesses as it sees fit and may limit the number of witnesses a Member may call in his defence if it considers the number proposed to be called is unreasonable;
  - viii) If a Member fails to attend a meeting of which he has had notice, the Standards Committee can proceed with the hearing in his absence or adjourn the hearing to another date.
- 3.4 The following findings are possible:
- i) That there was no failure to comply with the Code of Conduct;
  - ii) That there has been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct but that no action needs to be taken;
  - iii) That there has been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and that a sanction should be imposed. (In the event of such a finding against a person who is no longer a Member of the Authority, the Standards Committee is required simply to censure that person).
- 3.5 The following sanctions are available if a breach of the Code of Conduct is found:
- i) Censure (this is the only sanction available for someone who is no longer a Member);
  - ii) Restriction for a maximum period of 3 months of the Member's access to the premises of the Authority and their use of the resources of the Authority, provided

that such restrictions are reasonable and proportionate and do not unduly restrict the Member's ability to perform their functions as a Member;

- iii) Partial suspension for a maximum period of 3 months;
- iv) Partial suspension for a maximum period of 3 months or until such time as a written apology is submitted or any training or conciliation specified by the Standards Committee is undertaken;
- v) Suspension for maximum period of 3 months;
- vi) Suspension for a maximum period of 3 months or until such time as a written apology is submitted or any training or conciliation specified by the Standards Committee is undertaken.

Any sanction is to commence immediately following its imposition unless the Standards Committee directs, in the case of any sanction other than censure, that it shall commence on any date within any period of 6 months after its imposition.

#### 4. Main Features of Standards Board Guidance on Procedure

4.1 The process should be the same for all Members.

4.2 Standards Committees should not re-open the investigation, but they may consider fresh evidence.

4.3 Committees should aim to complete hearings within one working day, and avoid late-night sittings.

4.4 A pre-hearing process (normally in writing) should be used:

- to identify whether the Member involved disagrees with any of the ESO's findings of fact;
- to decide whether those disagreements are significant;
- to decide whether to hear evidence about those disagreements during the hearing;
- to decide whether any parts of the hearing should be in private;
- to decide whether any documents should be withheld from publication.

The pre-hearing process should also cover whether the Member wishes to be represented, whether they have evidence they wish to present, and whether the hearing time is practicable.

Model forms are provided for use for these purposes and are incorporated in the suggested Runnymede procedure below.

4.5 The ESO should be invited to comment on the Member's response to the report and say whether he or she wishes to be represented and give evidence at the hearing.

4.6 The Chairman should write to everyone involved at least two weeks before the hearing to outline the administrative arrangements and identified issues.

4.7 Standards Committees may delegate hearings to sub-committees. The Standards Board recommends that a panel of three or five Members is set up to hold such hearings.

4.8 The Standards Board recommends that an independent Member of the Committee should chair a hearing.

4.9 The Member should normally be allowed representation of his or her choice, but permission may be denied if the representative is directly involved in the matter, or withdrawn if the representative disrupts the hearing.

- 4.10 The Committee may limit the number of witnesses to what is reasonable, or in order to avoid time wasting or undue repetition.
- 4.11 The Member must be allowed to make verbal or written representations and give evidence. However in many cases no evidence will be necessary other than the ESO's report.
- 4.12 The Committee may question witnesses and allow cross-examination by the Member or by the ESO (or representatives). It can require that questions be put through the Chair.
- 4.13 The Committee should announce its decision at the end of the hearing. It is good practice to make a short written decision available on the day of the hearing, and to prepare the full written decision in draft on the same day. There will also be minutes of the meeting. The full written decision should be sent to the relevant people within two weeks.
- 4.14 A model format is provided for full written decisions.
- 4.15 Hearings should be held in public wherever possible. If it is necessary to exclude the public this should be limited if practicable to those parts of the hearing at which exempt information will be discussed or revealed.
- 4.16 The Monitoring Officer should be the main adviser to the Standards Committee, unless he has an involvement which would prevent his discharging an independent role. In this case he should arrange for another appropriately qualified Officer to advise the Committee.
- 4.17 In offering day-to-day advice to Members, Monitoring Officers should be aware of the potential conflict of interest which could arise if a hearing has to be held at a later stage. Informal discussions are unlikely to give rise to a conflict of interest, but Monitoring Officers should consider arranging for another Officer to give more formal advice, or ensuring that there is another person who can advise the Committee, if they themselves are placed in the position of advising a Member subject to allegations.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 The procedure set out at Appendix 'C' has been drafted having regard to the Standards Board's guidance and to other available advice.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 These will depend on the number and complexity of referrals. So far Runnymede has had no complaints about its Members referred to the Standards Board.
- 6.2 The Council has earlier agreed to bear the cost of legal expenses insurance for its Members in respect of advice and representation in the event of formal complaints. This is in place and details of the extent of cover and exclusions are available from the Director of Finance on request.

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**the procedure set out at Appendix 'C' be adopted for use in local determinations.**

**THE COMMITTEE IS ASKED:**

- i) **whether it wishes to set up a hearings Sub-Committee, and if so**
- ii) **how many Members should be on the Sub-Committee and whether it should be chaired by one of the independent Members.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

Background Papers:

Standards Board Guidance  
Advice and model documentation provided by Wragge and Co., Solicitors, for the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors.

8. OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATIONS (DAL)

The following matters have arisen with the Commissioner for Local Administration since the last meeting of the Committee.

<b>Matter</b>	<b>Date Notified</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Complaint of failure in administration and unsympathetic treatment in collection of Council Tax.	21 August 2003	Not pursued – no evidence of maladministration causing injustice.
Complaint of failure to take effective action in respect of alleged nuisance caused by operation of businesses at Brox Road, Ottershaw, and failure to take enforcement action in respect of the same businesses.	28 October 2003	Under consideration.
Complaint of unfair consideration of application to fell protected tree by landowner at Virginia Water.	8 December 2003	Not investigated – the statutory appeal system had already been used.
Complaint of inadequate protection of Council house tenant in respect of alleged nuisance and other actions by neighbour.	Autumn 2003	Not pursued – no evidence of maladministration.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers:

Relevant material on DAL file 61.21.

9. ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR ENGLAND – RECENT CASES (DAL)

Some recent cases were outlined in the training made available to Members of the Council at the end of last year. The Committee may be interested in the following further cases:

- i) Case Tribunals are continuing to determine a number of matters relating to parish Council Members who do not consider that they should have to register their interests or agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. A typical penalty is disqualification from office for a year.
- ii) At a training event on a West Country Council's Race Equality Scheme, a Member stated that he was a racist and proud of it, and made a number of remarks in support of his position. Complaints were received from other Councillors and from staff. He later gave an interview to the local paper and local radio station defending his views.

The Tribunal found that the Councillor's conduct at the training and his comments to the (external) trainer were such as to fail to treat others with respect. It also found that his general course of conduct, and the exacerbation of the initial comments and impression by the press interviews, amounted to bringing his office and the Council into disrepute. The Tribunal felt that a reprimand was appropriate in relation to the disrespect towards the trainer. However the other offence was more serious and it disqualified the Councillor for three years.

- iii) A Member of a Borough Council was convicted of two counts of fraud in relation to Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit (he did not disclose his full financial circumstances). Even after the first offence had been discovered, he failed to disclose the second in interviews with Council Officers until further investigation brought it to light. The Case Tribunal considered that he was guilty of bringing his office or authority into disrepute and disqualified him from service as a Member of any authority for two years.
- iv) A Councillor of a City Council voted against a motion to allow a business ratepayer to re-schedule its payments (the company was British Energy and the business rate bill was £1.8m). Although the matter had been considered in private session, the Councillor

disclosed the details to the local television station and took part in a news programme criticising the decision. She also gave the local newspaper copies of information contained in the Agenda. The Case Tribunal found a breach of the Code of Conduct by the disclosure of information received in confidence, and that there was not an overriding public interest which justified this. The Tribunal did however note that the matter had subsequently legitimately come into the public domain and that there was no evidence of lasting harm. The Councillor had a good record and was honest in her response to the complaint. The penalty was suspension from the Council for three months and the Tribunal recommended to the Council that it reviewed training needs for its Members.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers:

None (published material on Adjudication Panel website).

10. COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST MEMBERS OF RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL (DAL)

There have been no complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct against Members of the Council to date.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

Background Papers

None

11. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES (DAL)

The third Annual Assembly of Standards Committees will be held on 13 and 14 September 2004 at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham. A copy of the flier received from the Standards Board is attached at Appendix 'D'. Any Member of the Committee interested in attending is asked to contact the Monitoring Officer.

**(FOR INFORMATION)**

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee is minded to consider any of the foregoing items in private, it is the

**OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -**

**the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 14 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**(TO RESOLVE)**

**Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.**

a) Exempt Items

Appendix 'One' to Item 4, "Internal Audit".

b) Confidential Items

(No items to be considered under this heading).