

Pewsey Area Board 7 March 2011 Chairman's Announcements

Proposed Changes to Arrangements Governing the Conduct of Councillors

The Government's Localism Bill, published on 13 December 2010, makes significant changes to the current arrangements governing the conduct of councillors in Wiltshire. The proposals in the Bill include:

- removing the requirement for councils to adopt a national code of conduct for councillors;
- abolishing Standards for England, the national body responsible for overseeing the current standards regime in England;
- introducing new arrangements for the registration and declaration of personal interests, backed by the criminal law;
- giving councils a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors;
- enabling councils to adopt a voluntary code of conduct.

Councils, including unitary, town, parish and city councils will be expected to establish a committee to oversee the council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

We will be monitoring the Localism Bill as it proceeds through Parliament. The Bill is expected to become law in the Autumn 2011. Further details on the arrangements will be provided in regulations.

In the meantime the current arrangements for standards, including the local assessment, consideration and determination of complaints under the model code of conduct adopted by councils, will continue to apply. We anticipate that the new arrangements will not come into effect until the Spring 2012.

We will be providing updates on the progress of this legislation to towns, parish and city councils.

If you need any further information on this matter please contact:

Ian Gibbons, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
01225 713052 E-mail ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk; or

Nina Wilton, Head of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer
01225 713078 E-mail nina.wilton@wiltshire.gov.uk