

**Title: Standards Board for England Bulletin -
February 2008 Issue**

Reporting Officer: Nicola Mathiason, Head of Legal Services

1. Purpose

To inform members of the February issue of the Bulletin produced by the Standards Board for England (attached as Appendix 1).

2. Background

The Standards Board publishes a Bulletin every two months. It provides policy information and news on Standards issues. It is also available on the Standards Board website.

3. Key Issues

In the February issue the following items are of particular interest:

Prejudicial interests and setting the authority's annual budget

The Code of Conduct states that a member does not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to the functions of "setting Council Tax" or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Standards Board believes that this exemption covers the formal Council Tax meeting of the authority and also covers meetings where preparatory work is undertaken leading up to that meeting.

The Bulletin points out, however, that it does not cover members who are making decisions on whether to make grants to organisations that form one or more of their personal interests even though a specific budgetary provision has been made. The advice from the Standards Board is that if there is a doubt the safe course would be to declare a prejudicial interest or seek a dispensation from the Standards Committee.

Appeals to the Adjudication Panel for England

The Bulletin points out that it is good practice to include both the postal address and the website details of the Adjudication Panel for England when written decisions are issued following a Standards Committee hearing.

4. **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the contents of the February Bulletin.