

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Standards Committee – 20 October 2009

Joint Standards Committees

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Executive Summary

The Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/1255), came into force from 15 June 2009 and gives authorities a power to establish Joint Standards Committees.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to establish whether the Standards Committee would be interested in forming a Joint Standards Committee with any of their neighbouring Standards Committees should any of those committees also be interested.

2 Joint Standards Committees

- 2.1 The regulations give a discretion for two or more local authorities to set up a Joint Standards Committee, and make it clear that such a Joint Standards Committee can be established to discharge all of each participating authority's standards functions, or can be established to discharge just some of the authorities' standards functions, such that each authority retains its own Standards Committee to discharge those standards functions which have not been allocated to the Joint Committee.
- 2.2 Authorities may agree to establish a Joint Standards Committee which would establish a Referrals and a Review Sub-Committee, but each retain their own Standards Committees to discharge the functions of conducting hearings, providing Member training and promoting high standards of conduct. But where all standards functions are allocated to the Joint Standards Committee, then participating authorities would no longer maintain their own separate Standards Committees. Where a function is allocated to the Joint Standards Committee, it cannot then be discharged by the Standards Committee of an individual participating authority.

Where authorities wish to establish a Joint Standards Committee, the Full Council of each participating authority would need to resolve:-

- to establish the Joint Standards Committee;

- which standards functions are to be allocated to the Joint Committee and which, if any, are to be retained by the authority's own Standards Committee;
- the administrative arrangements to support the Joint Standards Committee;
- whether standards complaints should be addressed directly to the Joint Standards Committee, or should continue to be addressed to the individual authority;
- the number of Members, including Independent and Parish Members, to be appointed to the Joint Standards Committee by each participating authority, and their terms of office;
- make provision for the Joint Standards Committee to appoint Members to its Referrals, Review and/or Hearings Sub-Committees, as required;
- provide for the payment of allowances to Members of the Joint Standards Committee;
- provide a procedure for an authority to withdraw from the Joint Standards Committee; and
- provide how the costs incurred by the Joint Standards Committee shall be shared between the participating authorities (or in default to be determined by an arbitrator).

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are recommended to give their views as to whether they would be interested in participating in a Joint Standards Committee if other authorities were also interested.

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