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2006-2007
Waste and Recycling
2006-2007
Culture and Sport for
Hard to Reach Groups

Mr J G Watson
Independent Chairman of Standards
Committee

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21 December 2010

Dear Colleague,

The Future Role of Standards Committees

We have been waiting some months for details to emerge of the Coalition Government's proposals for the future of standards and our role as a Committee. The waiting ended last week when the 'Localism Bill' was published.

We will receive a report at our next meeting on 21 January 2011 with the full particulars. In the meantime, it is clear that under the draft proposals Councils will not be required to have a Standards Committee and it will be optional whether a Code of Conduct is retained.

Instead, the registration and declaration of financial and other interests is to be controlled by the creation of a criminal offence for contravention of the requirements which will be punishable in the Courts by a fine and possible disqualification.

It is expected that it will be about a year before the Bill becomes law with regulations providing the details probably following quickly afterwards.

In light of the uncertain future of the Committee I would consider it appropriate, and in the public interest, for the activities of the Committee to be scaled back to concentrate on our statutory and constitutional functions. This may also serve to restrict some expenditure.

I would welcome a discussion on whether others feel that this is a suitable approach and I will ask the Monitoring Officer to place a further item on the agenda to facilitate a debate.

May I thank you all for your substantial and valued contributions to the work of the Committee over the past year.

Seasons greetings!

Yours sincerely,

J. G. Watson

Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee

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Chief Executive: Patricia Rockall

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