

## TRAINING AND PILOT

**Report By: Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

### Wards Affected

Countywide

### Purpose

1. To update members with regard to the joint training with Worcestershire and Shropshire and the pilot undertaken with regard to returns to the Standards Board.
2. To update the Standards Committee in respect of the progress with Worcester and Shropshire with regard to potential joint arrangements and to inform members of the recent pilot conducted by the Standards Board.

### Financial Implications

3. None.

### Background

4. As members are aware I was asked to liaise with the legal departments in Worcester and Shropshire to consider partnership arrangements for the future especially with regards to dealing with review of initial requests for investigation. In addition to consider joint training between all members of the relevant committees affected excluding district councils.

### Consideration

5. I met with legal representatives from Worcester and Shropshire on 15th February 2008 to discuss the above matter. Shropshire are keen to develop a partnership arrangement as they are now to become a single unitary with responsibilities for parish councils and an increased number of members. Both authorities are keen to agree a joint programme for training and feel that this training should be provided once the guidance is issued by the Standards Board for England in respect of how initial investigation requests will be dealt with, a subsequent review and hearing. It is anticipated that this training will be provided around September / October 2008. This was felt to be a realistic timescale for partners involved. This does not prevent members seeking to continue progress with Shropshire in respect of considering joint committee arrangements for reviews.

6. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services took part in a pilot of the Standards Board for England feedback form. As members are aware the Board will become regulatory and will require the Monitoring Officer to provide data on a regular basis. This is to be provided by an on-line service and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services participated in a pilot. It was anticipated that the pilot would take approximately 1 hour. Unfortunately due to the slowness and the lack of easy reading of the initial table it took approximately 2 hours. It is anticipated that the on-line service will be much quicker. The

Head of Legal and Democratic Services fed back this concern and it is being addressed. There may also be issues with regard to compatibility between the council's IT system and the web browser being used by the Standards Board. This again is being investigated by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

## **Recommendations**

### **THAT**

- (i) the report be noted; and**
- (ii) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services continue to liaise with Shropshire County Council with regard to partnership arrangements / joint committee**

## **Background Papers**

None