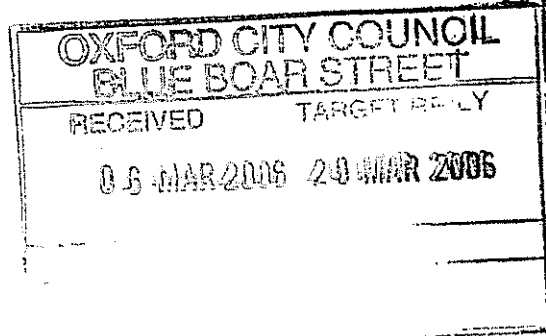


2 March 2006

Mr Jeremy Thomas
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
Blue Boar Street
Oxford
OX1 4EY



1st Floor
Cottons Centre
Cottons Lane
SE1 2QG

Enquiries: 0845 078 8181
Fax: 020 7378 5001

enquiries@standardsboard.co.uk
www.standardsboard.co.uk

Dear Mr Thomas

Re: The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

The Standards Board for England is contacting all monitoring officers in relation to changes to legislation, which come into force on 1 March 2006, so far as they relate to hearings of standards committees. The changes are contained in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and the Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) (Amendment) Regulations 2006; Parts 1 to 3 of the Schedule to the Order replace the existing Schedule 12A. It is intended that the descriptions of information listed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A are clearer and simpler, and some of the qualifications in Part 2 of the Schedule are replaced by a public interest test.

The additional categories of exempt information introduced by the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination) Regulations 2003 are largely unaffected, although regard will have to be had to the renumbering contained in the amendments. The relevant paragraphs from the 2003 regulations are set out below, with the updated paragraph numbering shown in bold:

[Removed by the 2006 regulations see paragraphs 1 and 2 in particular of the amended Part 1 to Schedule 12A 46. Information relating to the personal circumstances of any person]

7A. Information which is subject to any obligation of confidentiality

7B. Information which relates in any way to matters concerning national security.

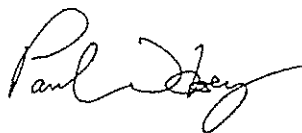
7C. The deliberations of a Standards Committee or a sub-committee of a Standards Committee established under the provisions of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 in reaching any finding on a matter referred under the provisions of section 60(2) or (3), 64(2), 70(4) or (5) or 71(2) of that Act."

The main alteration is that the new regulations no longer contain a specific provision of "Information relating to the personal circumstances of any person" (paragraph 16 of the 2003 regulations refer). It is considered that this provision is essentially covered by the provisions contained in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of the updated provisions. For ease of reference, paragraph 1 refers to "Information relating to any individual", whilst paragraph 2 refers to "Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual".

The current Standards Board for England guidance for standards committee determinations was written prior to the 2006 Order/Regulations coming into force. We have reviewed the guidance in light of the changes and consider that the substance does not need to be altered. However the wording of Schedule 12A currently set out in the Appendix 3 of the guidance should be read in accordance with the amendments. We remain of the view that it is in the public interest that hearings should generally be held in public and recommend that they are held in public where possible to ensure fairness and openness of the procedure. Standards Committees will have a continuing obligation to consider the requirements of Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights when holding local determination hearings.

Please ensure that you read this in conjunction with our guidance. The Standards Board for England will revise its guidance for standards committees when it produces guidance on the revised code of conduct.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hoey', written in a cursive style.

Paul Hoey
Head of Policy & Guidance



Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards
16-17 October 2006, ICC

Monday 16 October: at a glance

Please click on the relevant session for more information.

08.30 – 10.15 Registration

09.15 – 10.00 Getting up to speed
An informal introductory welcome. Attendance optional.

AN EFFECTIVE ETHICAL ENVIRONMENT: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

10.15 – 10.25 Welcome

10.25 – 10.40 Setting the standard

10.40 – 10.55 Bridging the gap: towards strategic regulation

10.55 – 11.25 What will an effective ethical environment look like?

11.25 – 11.45 Question time

11.45 – 12.00 Comfort break

12.00 – 13.00 SESSION 1 Implications of the revised Code of Conduct and the future ethical environment
All delegates attend a pre-allocated workshop.

13.00 – 14.15 Lunch

WHERE ARE YOU NOW? LOCATING THE GAP

14.15 – 15.15 Standards committees: a national snapshot

15.15 – 15.45 Comfort break

15.45 – 16.45 SESSION 2 How do you measure up?
All delegates attend a pre-allocated workshop.

16.45 – 17.00 Comfort break

TOOLS TO MAKE THE TRANSITION

17.00 – 18.15 SESSION 3 Bridging the gap: knowledge, techniques and skills

Delegates can choose between:

Case review – lessons learnt so far

A robust filter

(standards committee focused session)

Conducting an effective investigation

Holding an effective hearing

Investigations – work through

Hearings – work through

The revised Code – declaring interests

Investigations – in-house or out-house?

General open house Q & A

18.15 Close of day one

18.30 – 19.30 Fringe events (optional)

19.30 – 20.00 Drinks reception

20.00 – late Conference dinner

[View day two of the conference programme at a glance](#)

| [Privacy Policy](#) | Powered by TERMINALFOUR



Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards
16-17 October 2006, ICC

Tuesday 17 October: at a glance

Please click on the relevant session for more information.

View [day one](#) of the programme at a glance

08.00 – 09.00 Refreshments

TOOLS TO MAKE THE TRANSITION (continued)

09.00 – 10.15 SESSION 4 Bridging the gap: knowledge, techniques and skills

Delegates can choose between:

- Case review – lessons learnt so far
 - A robust filter
(monitoring officer focused session)
 - Conducting an effective investigation
 - Holding an effective hearing
 - Investigations – work through
 - Hearings – work through
 - The revised Code – declaring interests
 - Investigations – in-house or out-house?
 - General open house Q & A
-

10.15 – 10.45 Comfort break

10.45 – 11.45 When politics becomes personal: is local level governance the panacea?

11.45 – 12.00 Comfort break

12.00 – 13.15 SESSION 5 Bridging the gap: awareness, development, wider debate

Delegates can choose between:

- Corporate governance – integrating the ethical agenda
- Freedom of expression – drawing the line
- An inclusive approach to towns and parishes
- Towns and parishes – when things go wrong
- Training the trainer
- Working proactively – the role of standards committees

24

Standards committees – raising your profile
Issues of independence
Monitoring officer open house Q & A

13.15 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 15.45 SESSION 6 Bridging the gap: awareness, development, wider debate

Delegates can choose between:

Corporate governance – integrating the ethical agenda
Freedom of expression – drawing the line
An inclusive approach to towns and parishes
Towns and parishes – when things go wrong
Training the trainer
Working proactively – the role of standards committees
Standards committees – raising your profile
Issues of independence
Standards committee open house Q & A

15.45 – 16.00 Comfort break

16.00 – 16.20 Time to reflect

16.20 – 16.30 Moving forward

16.30 Close
