

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **ABOLITION OF THE STANDARDS BOARD REGIME**

As previously reported, it is intended to effect the abolition of the Standards Board regime through the Localism Bill. It is anticipated that the Bill will receive Royal Assent later this year.

Members will be required to continue to register and declare personal interests and will not be allowed to use their position improperly for personal gain. It is intended that wilful failure to comply with these requirements will constitute a criminal offence.

The requirement for Local Authorities to adopt a model code of conduct and for Local Authority members to abide by that code will be abolished. However, Local Authorities will be free to adopt their own, voluntary code of conduct should they so wish.

The requirement to maintain a Standards Committee will be abolished. However, Local Authorities will be free, should they choose, to establish voluntary Standards Committees to consider complaints about the conduct of elected and co-opted members. Such committees will, according to councils' constitutions, be able to censure but will not be able to suspend or disqualify members from council membership. All options are to be considered, in relation to the future of Standards at Blackburn with Darwen.

### **DISPENSATIONS GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Standards Committee recently granted dispensation to six Members of the Council to participate at the Finance Council on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011, in relation to the report on Preparation for Budget 2011/12 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011-15. The dispensations were granted for a period of one calendar month (2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2011).