

Your contribution is vital says MP

Parmjit Dhanda MP yesterday described how responsibilities across local government are moving back to where they belonged – at a local level.

The minister said that following the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, currently going through its final parliamentary stages, there will be consultation on the regulations

needed for the detailed operation of the new system.

Mr Dhanda, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government, recognised that there are concerns about resources and that the system will bring new challenges.

However, standards committees and

monitoring officers will be aided by the support and guidance of the Standards Board, and the clearer, simpler Code of Conduct, which will be looked at again early next year to make sure it is absolutely fit for purpose.

The minister finished by emphasising the vital contribution that delegates can make to building trust and respect in local governance.



Parmjit Dhanda MP

“ Maintaining standards of conduct is part of the bedrock of our democracy. ”

Counting down to local ownership

Patricia Hughes, Deputy Chair for the Standards Board for England, outlined how the new ethical framework will be implemented.



Patricia Hughes CBE

Patricia described the new roles and responsibilities the changes will bring for authorities and the Standards Board, gave details of possible issues arising from complaints, and explained how performance will be reported and monitored.

She said that the new framework is on track to be in place by April 2008. The Standards Board is already preparing advice and guidance for the change to ensure that it is both

smooth and effective. Findings from two recent pilot trials and details of a third pilot were also revealed.

Patricia said the thought-provoking results from these pilots will be used to help the Standards Board monitor performance and publish appropriate guidance.

She concluded that there is strong evidence that authorities are already gaining confidence in their role

as champions of high standards, and that this will be further strengthened by the new framework.

Chief Executive David Prince also spoke of new responsibilities in his speech earlier in the morning.

He said that the building blocks for local ownership are already in place and that the Standards Board will strive to ensure that the system is operated effectively at local level.

Agenda



08.00 – 09.00	Refreshments
09.00 – 10.15	Breakout sessions
10.15 – 10.45	Refreshments
10.45 – 12.00	What's the score?
12.00 – 13.15	Lunch
13.15 – 14.30	Breakout sessions
14.30 – 14.45	Comfort break
14.45 – 15.00	All clear
15.00 – 15.30	The next step
15.30 – 16.00	Networking/refreshments
16.00	Close

Find out more

Information on topics covered in the practical sessions can be found in our new **factsheets**, which are available online.

Same time – same place

All delegates attending this year's conference will receive booking information for next year's Annual Assembly as soon as it becomes available.

The Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees will be back at the ICC in Birmingham from 13-14 October 2008. We look forward to seeing you again.

Contact

The Standards Board for England
Fourth Floor, Griffin House
40 Lever Street
Manchester M1 1BB

Enquiries: 0845 078 8181

Minicom: 0161 817 5449 **Fax:** 0161 817 5499

Email: annualassembly2007@standardsboard.gov.uk

Web: www.standardsboard.gov.uk

Joining forces

Yesterday afternoon, delegates heard of the ways that standards committees can use joint arrangements to tackle the challenges presented by the local filter.

The session, called **Managing the filter: Resources, challenges and solutions** aimed to address some of the concerns authorities might have over their new responsibilities.

Joy Bowes and Mark Heath shared their insights into working

with joint arrangements, gained from taking part in pilots with their local authorities.

Their experience revealed the diverse ways authorities can use joint arrangements to take on the local filter – and it proved that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

The session showed that pooling resources among standards committees can be an effective way of meeting the challenges ahead.



Don't forget...

You can download handouts from many of the sessions at our conference website:

www.annualassembly.co.uk

See you next year

We hope you enjoyed the conference and look forward to seeing you at the 2008 Annual Assembly.