

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Under the Local Government Act the standards committee of a unitary council is responsible for promoting and maintaining standards of conduct by its own and its parish councillors and helping them to observe the relevant codes of conduct.

The council must have a parish presence on the main committee and on any sub-committee which deals with parish matters. That parish representative cannot be a parish councillor and also a Milton Keynes councillor.

The council needs to think about how it wants to deal with parish representation on its standards committee. **Before making any firm decisions the council must consult the parish councils in its area.** We began this process with an article in the august edition of the Parish and Town Council Newsletter.

On the 28th August 2001 the statutory regulations about the way the committee should operate and who should be on it came into force. One significant change from the draft regulations is that committees would be quorate even if the parish representative were not present, though they could not discuss parish council matters without the parish representative present. Another is that agendas and minutes must be made available to all parish councils in the area.

A standards committee must advise its authority on the adoption of its code of conduct. Authorities must adopt a code within six months of the government issuing a model code of conduct. The government has published a draft model code and has indicated an intention to publish the final version in October 2001. The Annual Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life has indicated that there will be a national parish code of conduct which all parish councillors will have to sign up to.

Allegations of misconduct against councillors will be dealt with by the national Standards Board unless the Board decide that the allegations should be referred to Milton Keynes Council's Monitoring Officer for consideration by the Council's standards committee. It is not yet clear how a decision to do this would be made.

Milton Keynes Council believe that it is important that all parishes should be thinking about the new legislation and representation issues now. Below are a number of questions that we would like you to consider:

- Do you think the standards committee of Milton Keynes Council should deal with parish issues by way of a separate sub-committee and if so, why?
- If so, how many members should it have?
- How long should they serve for?
- How should they be selected?

The Council will consider all responses received by 19 October 2001.

The new regulations require at least one parish representative to sit on the standards committee of the council even if there is a sub-committee to deal with parish issues. At its meeting on 23rd July 2001 the existing standards committee decided that I should write to all parish councils in the area inviting you to nominate suitable candidates to act as that representative.

Attached is a person specification you might find helpful to use when deciding who to nominate and a nomination form. The committee will select a shortlist of candidates from those nominated using this person specification, will carry out interviews and recommend a person to the council for service on the committee.

Please let me have your nominations by 19th October 2001. Remember parish councillors who are also Milton Keynes Council members are not eligible.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Jones.

Please send in your responses to:-

Mark Jones,
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