

Media and Communications Guidelines

1 The proposed guidelines

- 1.1 For the SORP Committee to operate successfully communication with the sector served is of importance. The SORP Committee, in particular, needs to be able to explain its work, decisions and agenda for future development of the SORP. The information communicated needs to be consistent and accurately reflect the work of the SORP Committee. By so doing the sector is informed of the work and challenges faced in maintaining and developing the SORP and thereby better equipped to contribute to the SORP's development.
- 1.2 A key aspect of our strategy was to place agendas, briefing papers, and minutes on the websites of both the Commission and OSCR. Another key aspect of our strategy is the Stakeholders Conference planned for April and the subsequent round-table events.
- 1.3 A further aspect of our communication is articles and events written or presented by SORP Committee members or staff of the SORP-making bodies used to disseminate the products or the SORP Committee's work, to inform and on occasions to encourage consideration of particular issues.
- 1.4 In so doing the joint SORP-making body meets the ASB's Code of Practice (SORPs: Policy and Code of Practice - July 2000) - (The Code of Practice) that requires that it "should conduct its proceedings in a spirit of openness and follow due process involving wide consultation.' The Code of Practice also requires consideration of 'any developments in the industry or sector that suggest guidance on accounting matters is desirable'.
- 1.5 The position of SORP Committee members as informed opinion leaders is essential in terms of bring back to the SORP Committee an awareness of topical debate in the sector about accounting issues and standards, and identifying areas where accounting standards can be advanced, or identifying matters where further guidance is desirable.
- 1.6 Other than the expectations and basic guidance set out in the SORP Committee's recruitment packs, this is an area of our work where to date no clear protocol has been established as to how both SORP Committee members take forward these objectives (requirements).

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- 1.7 As part of the recruitment of the SORP Committee all applicants were sent the 'Recruitment Information Pack' which included a description of the role of a SORP Committee member including the requirement to 'contribute to the development of the aim of the ASB to advance and maintain standards of financial reporting in the public interest' and an undertakings to 'help to champion the work of the SORP Committee' and 'act as an ambassador for the SORP Committee with its stakeholders'.
- 1.8 Annex A to the 'Recruitment Information Pack' provided guidance to applicants on conflict of interest and also included guidelines on publications and statements as follows:
- publications are made on a personal basis;
 - publications should not conflict with or discredit the work of the SORP Committee;
 - the views expressed should not commit the SORP Committee to a particular policy position; and
 - any article or published statement should be copied to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the SORP Committee in advance of publication.'
- 1.9 At the inaugural meeting of the new SORP Committee, members of the Committee, as part of the introduction to their work, considered the ASB's Code of Practice. It was noted (paper 1 November 2006 meeting) that the work of the SORP Committee is to develop a SORP in conformity with the Code of Practice and to share the ASB's aim of advancing and maintaining standards.
- 1.10 Any media or communication protocol needs to be consistent with our objectives (requirements) as a joint SORP-making body set out in the Code of Practice and also directed at ensuring our agenda, work and decisions are explained with consistency and accuracy in our communications.
- 1.11 In addition, any media or communications protocol should reflect the way in which we want our Committee to operate. In particular, members should feel free to express their views freely at SORP Committee meetings without fear of those views being criticised in our external communications. Equally members should feel confident that the decisions reached by them in Committee would not be undermined in our external communications.

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Question:

- 1. Does the Committee agree that a Media and Communication protocol should be established to help ensure these objectives are taken forward?**
- 2. Does the Committee agree that the criteria identified in paragraphs 1.10 and 1.11 should underpin any protocol?**
- 3. Does the Committee agree that these guidelines are sufficiently comprehensive? Does the Committee have ideas about additional matters which should be included in the guidelines?**