



AGENDA ITEM : 5

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 2006

STANDARDS BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

RICHARD G LONG,

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek the Committee's views regarding establishment of a work programme for the year.

BACKGROUND

2. Now that meetings of the Committee have been included as a regular feature in the Council's calendar with at least four meetings to be held during the year in May, September, December and March, Members may want to consider taking a more proactive stance in planning its future workload.
3. With that in mind it is suggested that, in addition to any ad hoc business e.g. hearings in relation to Members conduct referred to the Committee for local determination, or other issues emanating from the Standards Board, the Committee consider establishing an annual work programme focusing on the various areas of responsibility under the remit of the committee.
4. The Committee's current terms of reference are as follows:-
 1. to make reports or recommendations to the Council in relation to:-
 2. the approval by the Council of local codes of conduct for Members and officers, codes of practice, standing orders and protocols, taking account of national models and guidance or case tribunals.
 3. the implementation of local codes of conduct etc, and the dissemination throughout the Authority of information and guidance on their operation.
 4. consideration of any reports relating to the conduct of Members or officers which may be referred to it by the Council's Chair, Monitoring Officer or by the

Director of Resources under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, including issues relating to Members' and officers' interests and the maintenance and management of any relevant registers of interests.

5. ensuring that the highest standards of financial probity are maintained throughout the Authority, within policies set by the Council from time to time.
 6. consideration of relevant reports referred by the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer and make recommendations thereon to the Council as necessary.
 7. Grant dispensations to Councillors, Co-opted Members and Parish
 8. Council Members from the requirements relating to declarations of interest as set out in the Code of Conduct.
 9. Consider matters referred to it by the Ethical Standards Officers.
 10. The investigation and determination of allegations of breaches of Members' Codes of Conduct within such statutory provisions or guidance as may exist.
 11. To have oversight of the Constitution
 12. To maintain an overview of the whistle-blowing policy, complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.
 13. Discharge all of the above functions required by the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to Parish Councils.
 14. Review compliance with relevant standards, codes of practice and corporate governance policies of or relating to the Council.
 15. Consider reports referred from the Member Development Working Group and make recommendations to Council.
 16. Submit an annual report to Council.
5. As issues will emerge throughout the year the work programme itself will continually evolve. However, the following list, in no particular priority order, identifies suggested topics the Committee may wish to consider as part of any future programme of work.

(a) Regular Items – The following are items that may need to be addressed on a regular or annual basis:

- Annual Report to Council –
In order to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Standards Committee the Constitution has recently been amended to include provision for an annual report to be submitted to Council.

The Committee may wish to consider the timing of the report e.g. the last meeting of the year or first meeting after the Council's annual meeting, the issues to be covered in the report, and whether the Chair should present the report.

- Annual Report -Ombudsman's Report
- Review of Ombudsman Complaints and Stage 3 Complaints
- Review of Members' Interests/Gifts and Hospitality
- Training – Standards Committees (e.g. Mock Hearings)
- Training – Councillor and Co-opted Members (e.g. Induction)
- Training – Parish Councils
- Service Assurance Statement for the Statement of Internal Control (CMT)
- Procurement Process (CMT)
- Member Development Strategy –
The Committee considered a report on the Member Development Strategy and Member Development Programme at its last meeting prior to its approval by Council on 17 May 2006. The Member Development Working Group established at the annual meeting of the Council is now tasked with developing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy and Programme and to report regularly to this committee on progress.

(b) One – Off Issues

- Review Member/Officer Protocol
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Corporate Governance
- Corporate Governance in Schools
- CPA outcome
- Review of Complaints Procedures
- Review of Constitution
- Review of Officer Scheme of Delegation
- Protocol on mayoral/civic gifts

- Local Investigation and Determination – Code of Conduct – Review of Complaints Procedures
- Financial Governance Arrangement (Audit Committees)
- Indemnities for Members - Costs of Local Investigations and Determinations
- Code of Conduct for Non-Voting Co-Opted Members and Advisers
- Review Use of Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Review of Independent Members –
As members have recently been appointed for a further 3 years a review of the appointment process will not be required until January/February 2009.
- Adjudication Panel and Standard Board Decisions –
The Committee at its previous meeting agreed that updates in relation to decisions from tribunals and the Board would be notified via the Standards Board bulletins and newsletters. Copies to be circulated to elected and co-opted members of the Council, copies would also be available in the Members' Library. Where particular cases are felt to be relevant to the work of the committee or the Council they will also be reported directly to the Committee.

(c) Completed Tasks

The following matters were considered by the Committee at the most recent meeting held on 8 May 2006:

- Review of Guidance Licensing Committee
- Review of Guidance Planning Committee
- Member Development Strategy 2006/2007

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6. Financial implications are not known at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The Committee is asked whether

- a. An annual work programme should be established.
- b. Identify any further issues to be included in the work programme.
- c. Determine and prioritise the issues to be included in the work programme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

AUTHOR

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