

AGENDA ITEM: 6

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2008

WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

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DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the committee with details of work undertaken during 2007/2008 and to provide information to assist in the consideration of topics for inclusion in the work programme for 2008/2009.

BACKGROUND

2. The committee agreed at the start of the 2006/2007 municipal year that, in addition to dealing with investigations and other urgent matters, an annual work programme be developed to provide a more structured focus to the work of the committee.
3. The following items were agreed as the basis of the work programme for 2007/2008. Column 2 identifies the progress made against each subject area:

Work Programme Topics 2007/2008	Progress
Review of Gifts and Hospitality Register	Slipped to 2008/2009
Training for Standards Hearings – Mock Hearings – Code of Conduct	Members attended training hosted by Stockton Council – 25 October 2007
Training for Co-opted/Parish Council Members – Ethics /Code of Conduct	Monitoring Officer attended meetings of the Parish Councils to deliver training on the Code of Conduct : Nunthorpe Parish Council – 3 October 2007 Stainton and Thornton – 9 October 2007
Code of Conduct for Employees	Awaiting Government legislation
Review of Code of Corporate	Reported to Standards Committee – 27

Governance	May 2007
Ethical Governance Audit	Reported to Standards Committee – 11 December 2007 – Actual audit to be conducted and reported during 2008/2009
Review of Member/Officer Protocol	On-going
Annual Ombudsman's Letter	Reported to Standards Committee - 11 September 2007
CPA Outcome	Awaiting outcome
Review of Officer Scheme of Delegation	Slipped to 2008/2009
Adjudication Panel and Standards Boards Decisions	Reported to Standards Committee – 11 December 2007. Copies of SBE Bulletins 35-39 (September 2007 – April 2008) were circulated to Members and Co-opted Members
In addition to the above the Committee also considered reports on the following further topics during 2007/2008	
Role of the Standards Committee Adoption of the new Code of Conduct and tracking of changes in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill Licensing Act Training Corporate Complaints Monitoring Ombudsman Training Chair's Report on 2007 Annual Standards Conference Code of Conduct – Hearings and Initial Assessment – establishment of sub-committees Hearings Panel – 18 September 2007	

4. In order to plan a work programme for the coming year Members are asked to consider the following matters that could form the work programme for 2008/2009.
5. In view of the changes brought about under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and, following establishment of the new sub-committees, there will be additional duties placed upon members of the committee in preparing for its new local assessment, review and determination functions. It is suggested therefore that the work programme should not be overly ambitious and that it can be delivered within the municipal year. Should urgent matters arise during the year further items may be added to the programme or additional meetings convened.
6. The following tables identify potential areas of work to be considered by the committee during the course of the forthcoming year and incorporates a number of standing items and ongoing items from the committee's previous work programme that are awaiting information from external sources e.g. Code of Conduct for Employees.

Standard Items and On-going Issues	
Adjudication Panel and Standards Boards Decisions	Details of individual decisions that may impact on Members or the Council
Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Monitoring	Reporting of complaints, comments and complements received by the Council
Annual Ombudsman's Letter	Report in relation to complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman
Annual Audit and Inspection Letter	Audit Commission Audit and Inspection Letter – Summary and findings of statutory audit
Training – Local Determination of Complaints	To carry out training in light of any further legislation or guidance issued by the Standards Board England to ensure that the sub-committees operate effectively and efficiently
Review of Member/Officer Protocol	Report to revise current protocol
Reports in relation to Investigations -Complaints against Members	Report giving details of complaints received and progress on individual cases
Code of Conduct for Employees	Review current Code in line with any legislative changes
Corporate Area Assessment	Report on the outcome of recent inspections

Topics	Action Taken/To be Taken
27 May 2008	
Code of Conduct and Investigations – Standards Board Guidance ‘Local Assessment of Complaints’	As from the 8 th May the Council is responsible for dealing with most complaints against Councillors. In advance of agreed formal procedures members received a briefing report on the Code of Conduct and investigations together with Standards Board Guidance on ‘Local Assessment of Complaints.
Review of Code of Corporate Governance 2008	Committee received a report updating the corporate governance framework in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE document ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’
10 June 2008	
Appointment of a second parish council representative	Stainton and Thornton Parish Council have been requested to nominate a representative to the committee in order to comply with the requirements of the 2007 Act
Member Development Strategy	Report to seek approval of the strategy

2008/2009	
Standards Board Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees	Report on the annual Standards Board for England conference
9 September 2008	
Review of Register of Interests/Register of Gifts and Hospitality	Examination of Register entries
Local Investigation of Complaints against Members and Procedures for Dealing with Standards Issues	Report to seek approval to arrangements, criteria and processes for dealing with local investigation of complaints The report should also deal with any further developments that arise from the implementation of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Consider how the role and work of the committee and its assessment and investigation functions are publicised to raise awareness both within the Council and with the public (design of complaints forms, leaflets, website information etc.)
Changes to the Constitution	Report on changes approved by Council and to recommend changes to the terms of reference of the committee to reflect the new functions and responsibilities
Corporate Area Assessment	To report outcome of inspection
Ethical Governance Audit	Report on outcome of the desktop exercise undertaken to establish the current position in respect Council policies
9 December 2008	
Review Member/Officer Protocol	Report to consider whether protocol is being complied with.
Member Training and Development Programme	Report monitoring Member attendance at training events
10 March 2009	
Review of Members/ Officers' Interests/Gifts and Hospitality Registers	Review of Registers
Review of Code of Corporate Governance 2009	Report on annual review of Code

7. Members are asked to consider the above items and to offer suggestions for any additional future topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Members' views are requested regarding the determination of topics to be included in the committee's work programme for 2008/2009.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Standards Committee Minutes 2007/2008

AUTHOR

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