

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE:

22 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

AGENDA ITEM:

FORWARD PLAN 2015/16

Reason for this Report

1. To consider the updated Forward Plan of matters for consideration by the Standards and Ethics Committee in 2015/16.

Background

2. The Standards and Ethics Committee's Terms of Reference provide the Committee with responsibility in the following areas:
 - (a) To monitor and scrutinise the ethical standards of the Authority, its Members, employees and any associated providers of the Authority's services and to report to the Council on any matters of concern.
 - (b) To advise the Council on the content of its Ethical Code and to update the Code as appropriate.
 - (c) To advise the Council on the effective implementation of the Code including such matters as the training of Members and employees on the Code's application.
 - (d) To consider and determine the outcome of complaints that Councillors and co-opted members have acted in breach of the Code in accordance with procedures agreed by the Standards Committee, including the imposition of any penalties available to the Committee.
 - (e) To oversee and monitor the Council's Whistleblowing procedures and to consider ethical issues arising from complaints under the procedure and other complaints.

- (f) To grant or refuse requests for dispensations in respect of Members' interests under the Members' Code of Conduct in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions.
- (g) To undertake those functions in relation to Community Councils situated in the area of the Council and members of those Community Councils which are required by law.
- (h) To recommend to Council and the Executive any additional guidance on issues of probity.
- (i) To hear and determine any complaints of misconduct by Members or a report of the Monitoring Officer, whether on reference from the Ombudsman or otherwise.
- (j) To recommend the provision to the Monitoring Officer of such resources as he/she may require for the performance of his/her duties.

Issues

- 3. The work plan for the Committee needs to reflect the Council's Annual Governance Statement, and any issues arising from the Committee's work in promoting high standards and managing complaints. The views of this Committee assist in the development of an ongoing work programme designed to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the Council.
- 4. The Committee last considered and agreed its Forward Plan at the Committee meeting in January 2015.

Legal Implications

- 5. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report. However, the Committee is reminded of its statutory role contained in the extract from the Local Government Act 2000 set out below which should be considered alongside its terms of reference when setting the Forward Plan:

54 Functions of standards committees

(1) The general functions of a standards committee of a relevant authority are--

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the authority, and*
- (b) assisting members and co-opted members of the authority to observe the authority's code of conduct.*

(2) *Without prejudice to its general functions, a standards committee of a relevant authority has the following specific functions—*

(a) advising the authority on the adoption or revision of a code of conduct,

(b) monitoring the operation of the authority's code of conduct, and

(c) advising, training or arranging to train members and co-opted members of the authority on matters relating to the authority's code of conduct.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to consider the updated Forward Plan 2015/16, as set out in **Appendix A**, and advise officers how it wishes to progress the various items or topics contained therein.

Marie Rosenthal
Director of Governance and Legal Services
16 September 2015

Appendices

Appendix A updated Forward Plan 2015/16

Background Papers

Committee report 'Forward Plan', January 2015 and minutes in respect thereof