

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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TITLE OF REPORT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND THE ACTING MONITORING OFFICER
 COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To consider the Annual report of the Standards Committee in relation to its ethical standards in the preceding civic year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Council receives and notes the Annual Report of the Standards Committee attached at Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In line with recommended good governance practice to report the work of Standards Committee to the full Membership, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 To return to the oral reports provided to Annual Council. However, this was not considered an appropriate option given a written report would demonstrate and communicate the work of the Committee more effectively.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 None – other than the Standards Committee as part of their deliberations on the matters detailed within the Annual Report.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 The current standards regime was introduced in July 2012 following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act'). There is a legal duty under section 27 of the Act to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. The Standards Committee has the responsibility under the Council's Constitution to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. As part of that process, between May 2013 and April 2016 an oral Annual

Report was delivered by the elected Chairman of the Standards Committee. This was changed last year to the report in the form of Appendix A.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The report at Appendix A sets out the work of the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer during the civic year 2017/18. Of particular note is the amended Councillor Code of Conduct and new Register of Interest process that applies from 4 May 2018.
- 8.2 Councillors are also reminded of and encouraged to attend, the training session which has been arranged for Tuesday 22 May 2018 at 7pm in the Council Chamber. The session will include both finance and governance topics, including Councillor conduct, the amended Code and principles of good decision making.
- 8.3 Looking ahead to 2018/19 the Member Planning Code of Good Practice is due for review (towards the end of 2018 and early 2019) and this may be considered by the Standards Committee if further changes are proposed before recommendation to Full Council.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Although it is not specifically referred to in the Constitution, Full Council has routinely received an Annual Report on standards issues. There is no legal requirement to have an Annual Report, however it is considered good practice and is an approach adopted by a large number of authorities.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no capital or revenue implications arising from the content of this report.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Appropriate policy frameworks help to ensure good governance of the Council and therefore reduce risk of poor practice or unsafe decision making.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 The Councillor Code of Conduct includes at 3.2(a) the duty to *“carry out your duties and responsibilities with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their race, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, disability, sex or sexual orientation, age, religion or belief”*. There is also the duty at 3.2 (b) *“not do anything which may cause the authority to breach equalities legislation.”*

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 None. The work outlined within the report is within the Acting Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officers' caseload.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix A – Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2016/17.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Jeanette Thompson Acting Corporate Legal Manager and Monitoring Officer
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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Reports to Standards Committee 2017/18.