



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 13th February 2008

Subject: Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/08

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's comments on the first draft of the Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/08. This report provides an outline of the content of the first draft at Appendix 1.
2. Members of the Committee are asked to:
 - Note the contents of the report;
 - Review their biographies in the membership section of the report and make any necessary amendments; and
 - Comment on the draft report and make any suggestions for additional content.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's comments on the first draft of the Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/08. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 It has been proposed that an Annual Report be submitted to the Council to outline the achievements of the previous year and plans for the year 2008/09.
- 2.2 Last year's Annual Report was well received by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and full Council, and was published on the Council's website.
- 2.3 The Annual Report now forms part of the reporting arrangements with the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and will be submitted to them at their first meeting of the 2008/09 municipal year as the second of the six monthly updates.

3.0 Main Issues

Format of the report

- 3.1 Members of the Committee will note that some further information has been added to the membership section of this year's annual report. This seeks to explain the roles of the different Members of the Committee. As before, Members of the Committee are asked to check their biographies from last year, in case they wish to make any additions or amendments.

The Work of the Committee 2007 - 2008

- 3.2 The section regarding the work of the Committee is categorised in the same way as last year's annual report, into five issue areas which reflect the Committee's terms of reference. The content is also broadly similar to the 6 monthly report to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee approved on 14th January 2008, although additions have been made and some of the finer details removed.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee will note that significant additions may need to be made to the report in light of the local assessment arrangements, and these will be reflected in the final report which will come to the Committee for approval in April 2008.
- 3.4 Promoting, monitoring and reviewing the codes of conduct
- Members Code of Conduct 2007
 - Reviewing the Codes and Protocols
 - Ethical Audit 2006
 - Ethical Audit 2007
 - Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct
 - Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
 - Officer Code of Conduct
 - Raising the profile of the Committee

- 3.5 Providing guidance and training
- Induction for City Councillors
 - Training on the Members' Code of Conduct 2007
 - E-learning Modules
 - Parish Council Training
 - Governance Matters
- 3.6 Relationship with Parish and Town Councils
- Annual Audit
 - Training on the new Code of Conduct
 - Parish and Town Council Induction Pack
- 3.7 Corporate Governance issues
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment
 - Corporate Governance Statement
 - Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
- 3.8 Working with other agencies
- Consultation and Research
 - Standards Board for England
 - Adjudication Panel for England
 - Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)

Issues for 2008 - 2009

- 3.9 The potential work of the Committee for the next municipal year is summarised at the end of the report.

These issues are outlined below:

- Implementation of the Ethical Audit 2007 action plan
- Changes in the role of the Standards Board for England

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 There are no implications for Council policy.
- 4.2 Producing a report which details the Committee's work throughout the year and the key decisions it has taken promotes transparency in the Committee's actions.
- 4.3 The annual report is also a method by which Members and officers can be informed of the Committee's role and its inputs and outputs. This is an objective of the Standards Committee communication plan which seeks to cascade regular information to Members and officers. The annual report will therefore have a fundamental contribution to the corporate governance arrangements of the Council.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal or resource implications.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report summarises the contents of the draft annual report for the year 2007-2008.
- 6.2 The publication of this Annual Report will support the Council's governance arrangements by promoting transparency in the Committee's actions and help fulfill the Standards Committee Communication Plan.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members of the Committee are asked to:
- Note the contents of the report;
 - Review their biographies in the membership section of the report and make any necessary amendments; and
 - Comment on the draft report and make any suggestions for additional content.