



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 17th February 2009

Subject: Standards Committee Annual Report 2008/09

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 2008/09. 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 2008/09. 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 2009/10 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, specifically in relation to the Monitoring Officer. 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 issue areas which reflect the Committee's terms of reference. However a section on the local assessment process has been added to incorporate this additional area of responsibility for the Standards Committee. The content is also broadly similar to the 6 monthly report which the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee received on 11th February 2009.
- 3.3 Promoting, monitoring and reviewing the codes of conduct
- Members Code of Conduct 2009
 - Reviewing the Codes and Protocols
 - Ethical Audit 2007
 - Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct
 - Considering final investigation reports
 - Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
 - Officer Code of Conduct
- 3.4 Local assessment of complaints
- Creation of the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees
 - Adopting the local assessment procedures
 - Review of local assessment procedures
 - Raising awareness of the local assessment process
 - Training and guidance for members of the sub-committees

- 3.5 Providing guidance and training
- Induction for City Councillors
 - Governance Matters
- 3.6 Relationship with Parish and Town Councils
- Addressing the results of the Annual Audit
 - Parish and Town Council conference
 - Training for Parish and Town Councillors
- 3.7 Working with other agencies
- Consultation and Research
 - Local Government Chronicle Awards 2009
 - The Centre for Local & Regional Government Research
 - Standards Board for England
 - Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)

Issues for 2009 - 2010

- 3.8 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 action plan
- Raising the profile of the Standards Committee
- Implementation of the new Member and Officer Codes of Conduct
- Retirement of the current Chair

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 2008-2009.

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.

Background Documents

None.