

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROVIDERS OF PUBLIC SERVICES

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

To note and endorse the action points arising from the self-assessment of the guidance on ethical standards for providers of public services.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the Council continues to adhere to high standards in the way it works.

Corporate Implications

Corporate governance of the Council is essential to ensure the high standards of conduct expected of a public body are in place, meeting all our legal obligations and the seven principles of public life (known as the “Nolan” principles).

There are no financial implications to the actions set out in this report.

This item is being submitted to the Standards Committee and the Audit Committee, given their respective roles in overseeing the corporate governance activities of the Council. No issue have been identified for referral to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Executive Summary

Guidance was issued in December 2015 **to help** public bodies assess themselves, with suggested measures to undertake such a review. Although not a requirement, as a matter of good practice, a review has been undertaken. No areas of non-compliance have been identified but a number of development actions were identified by the Officer Corporate Governance Group to continue to maintain our high standards, which the Committee is asked to consider and endorse.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

The way we work underpins all of the Council’s priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.

Background and Issues

The Council has robust corporate governance measures in place, which are reviewed and updated each year in the Annual Governance Statement considered by the Audit Committee and signed on behalf of the Authority by the Leader and Chief Executive. This statement is informed from the annual assurance statements signed by each head of service and actions identified as appropriate. These actions

have been included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register and reviewed on a regular basis with six-monthly reports to Audit Committee and Cabinet.

In December 2015, the Committee on Standards in Public Life issued guidance on ethical standards for providers of public services. This identified a number of suggested measures for bodies to use as a self-assessment, to be used to be explicit about their expectations on ethical standards. The suggested measures are to identify evidence of:

- Leadership commitment to ethical standards.
- Board and individual responsibility for ethical standards.
- Establishing an ethical awareness and capability in recruitment, induction, progression, training and professional development.
- Appraisal, promotion and reward procedures that take account of values and ethical behaviour.
- Commissioner-provider and user-provider dialogue.

Attached as Appendix 1 is the completed self-assessment for Wycombe District Council, together with suggested action points, for the Committee's consideration.

Conclusions

No areas of non-compliance have been identified but a number of development actions have been identified to continue to maintain our high standards, which the Committee is asked to consider and endorse.

Next Steps

Implementation of the agreed development actions.

Background Papers

Ethical Standards for providers of Public Services – guidance issued by the Committee on Standards in Public Life December 2015.