

Standards Committee 20 March 2018

ANNUAL REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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Wards affected: All.

PROPOSED DECISION

That Standards Committee notes and approves the Annual Report of Standards Committee attached at Appendix 1.

Reason for Decision

In accordance with Standards Committee's recommendation of 10 October 2017 which was noted by Council on 11 December 2017 this is the first Annual Report of Standards Committee to full Council since the implementation of the current standards regime.

Corporate Implications

1. The Localism Act 2011 sets out the current provisions in relation to member standards and ethics, and the Standards Committee and associated processes fulfils this requirement.
2. The publishing of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, is the formal reporting of the Council's governance arrangements and approval is undertaken by Audit Committee; this is an opportunity to report on the quality of those arrangements and identify any actions to improve upon them. Regulation 6 imposes a requirement, each financial year, to prepare an Annual Governance Statement and to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control required by Regulation 3.
3. CIPFA/SOLACE issued new guidance for 2016/7 entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016". At its meeting on 15 June 2017 Audit Committee reviewed this, and recommended some areas for improvement. The recommendation which was specific to Standards Committee was that there should be an annual report from Standards Committee to Full Council setting out the work carried out by Standards Committee in the preceding year, outlining the work programme of the Standards Committee over the past year, including training provided, the number of member conduct complaint referrals and outcomes, and any outside assurance in relation to operational processes. The principle of an annual report has already been endorsed.

Executive Summary

4. The report recommends noting and approval of the Annual Report 2017-18 of the Standards Committee.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

5. The proposed decision supports the Council's overall governance arrangements, including the Local Code of Governance and its Progress objective in the Corporate Plan by supporting good governance practices.

Background and Issues

6. Prior to July 2012, the previous statutory Standards Committee which was obligatory under the Local Government Act 2000, used to report annually to full Council, but this practice was not continued under the replacement provisions enacted by the Localism Act 2011. On 10 October 2017, Standards Committee recommended the introduction of an Annual Report of Standards Committee. The reasons were outlined in that report and are repeated in the Corporate Implications above. Full Council received the minutes on 11 December 2017.
7. The proposed Annual Report of WDC Standards Committee is attached at Appendix 1. It takes into account the format of the Annual Report which Standards Committee used to produce prior to the Standards regime being changed in 2012, and Audit Committee annual reports.
8. Standards Committee is invited to note and approve the Annual Report.

Options

9. There are no options other than to amend the content of the Annual Report; the principle of an Annual Report has already been established.

Next Steps

10. Full Council will note the Annual Report when presented with Standards Committee's minutes on 16 April 2018. Standards Committee will be invited to approve future annual reports at its March meetings.

Background Papers

None.