

Report

Council



Part 1

Date: 26th November 2018

Subject Standards Committee Annual Report 2017/18

Purpose To present the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2017/18

Author Head of Law and Regulation
Chair of Standards Committee

Ward All wards

Summary This Report presents to Council the fifth Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2017/18. The Annual Report provides information to the Council about the work carried out by the Committee during the previous 12 months and identifies any specific issues that have arisen.

This fifth Annual Report covers the period from November 2017 to November 2018 and follows on from the last report presented to Council in November 2017

Proposal To receive the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2017/18 and to note the forward work programme

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Standards Committee
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

Signed

Background

1. The Local Government Act 2000 Part III requires the Council to establish a Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct by Councillors, co-opted members and Community Councillors. This role involves advising and training Members on the Code of Conduct, determining any complaints of misconduct, the imposition of sanctions, where appropriate, and considering any applications for dispensation under the Code.
2. The composition and membership of the Standards Committee is prescribed by the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended) and comprises:-
 - 5 independent members (including an independent chair and vice-Chair)
 - 3 Councillors
 - 1 community council representative.
3. The Standards Committee is required to meet at least once annually in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. In practice, the Committee meets on a scheduled quarterly basis and additional special meetings are arranged, as necessary, to deal with specific matters such as misconduct hearings and requests for dispensation.
4. The Annual Report provides information to the Council about the work carried out by the Committee during the last 12 months and identifies any specific issues that have arisen.
5. This fifth Annual Report covers the period from November 2017 to November 2018 and follows on from the last report presented to Council in November 2017.

The Committee's work in 2017/18

6. The Annual Report summarises the work carried out by the Standards Committee during the past 12 months. The Committee has met on 4 occasions during this period.
7. The Report contains reference to the new Protocol for Member Officer Relations which was recommended by Committee and adopted by Council in September.
8. The Committee was pleased to note that 47 out of 50 City Councillors had now attended the mandatory Code of Conduct training and the presentation slides and documents have been provided to those who have not attended. Many community councillors have also received appropriate training and good feedback was received about the quality of this training as part of our ethical standards review of community councils.
9. There have been changes to the membership of the Standards Committee during the past year. John Davies from Bishton Community Council was confirmed as the community council representative by the Council on 28th November 2017. Councillor Val Dudley replaced Councillor Fouweather as the elected representative from the Conservative Group, following the Council AGM in May 2018. Dr Paul Worthington was appointed to the vacancy for the final independent member position and this was ratified by Council in July 2018.
10. The Report highlights the fact that there were no formal findings of misconduct against any local Councillors during the past 12 months. Three complaints have been made to the Ombudsman but none have been accepted for investigation. Three complaints were also made about local community councillors but, again, they were not investigated. No formal complaints were dealt with under the Local Resolution Protocol.

Forward Work Programme

11. The Annual Report also sets out the priorities for the future work programme.

Financial Summary

12 There are no financial implications as the costs of operating and supporting the Standards Committee are covered within existing budgets. Independent members of Standards Committee receive a fixed fee for attendance at and preparation for meetings in accordance with the half daily rates prescribed by the IRP for Wales.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
An ineffective Standards Committee would undermine public confidence in local government and would lead to poor quality decision-making, with the risk of legal challenge, reputational harm to the Council and sanctions imposed on individual Members	H	L	By proactively promoting high standards of ethical conduct among elected Members and officers and delivering effective training, there have been no findings of misconduct and no serious complaints of breaches of the Code.	Standards Committee Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer
Failure to agree key priorities and a structured forward work programme could lead to a reduction in standards and behaviour and undermine the effectiveness of the Committee	M	L	The forward work programme sets out a structured basis for reviewing all ethical standards policies and procedures and reviewing training needs and development.	Standards Committee Monitoring Officer Deputy Monitoring Officer

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The promotion of high standards of ethical conduct among elected Members and officers maintains public confidence in local government and helps to make Newport a Fairer City

Options Available

- (a) To receive the Standards Committee Annual Report and note the forward work programme
- (b) To reject the report and/or ask for further work to be undertaken

Preferred Option and Why

To receive the Standards Committee Annual Report and note the forward work programme

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

Set out in the Report.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no staffing implications.

Background Papers

Committee reports and background papers November 2017 to November 2018

Dated: 12th November 2018.