

Committee: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 21 September 2009

5

Title: WORK PROGRAMME

Author: Michael Perry, Assistant Chief Executive,
01799 510416

Item for decision

Summary

1. At its last meeting members of the committee highlighted a number of areas to be included in a work programme including the publication and circulation of an annual report based on the annual return, the presentation of the report to Full Council, for members of the Committee to undertake a series of presentations to parish councils, provide training where necessary and to consider if there were any areas within the annual return where further action could be taken by the Committee. Further to that meeting of the Committee I met with the chairman to formulate various proposals which are addressed in this report.

Recommendations

2. That members agree a work programme for the remainder of the council year.

Background Papers

3. None.

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	It is proposed there will be reports on the issue of communication throughout the council year.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Finance	Any work undertaken by the committee must be within existing financial restraints.
Human Rights	None.
Legal implications	None.

Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

5. In accordance with members' wishes an annual report on the working of the Standards Committee was prepared and presented by the chairman to Full Council at its meeting on 21 July. The report was published with the agenda and the minutes of the meeting. The chairman has also had a meeting with the Leader of the Council.
6. In considering what else could be achieved, the chairman and I had regard to the fact that the Standards Committee has no budget and that any work therefore must be within the council's existing resources.
7. The Local Government Association in consultation with ACSeS and the Standards Board have produced revised guidance on probity in planning. It is a statutory function of this Committee to advise the Council on Codes of Conduct and protocols and I therefore suggest that a report on the revised guidance is considered at this meeting.
8. I also suggest that at this meeting members consider a report on working in partnership.
9. Finally, an area of best practice suggested by one of the authorities nominated for the Standards Award by the LGC was that the Standards Committee should receive a report updating it on cases decided by the Adjudication Panel for England. Members will recall that initially all cases had to be dealt with by the Adjudication Panel. However, given the greater emphasis on localism the majority of cases will inevitably become appeals against the decisions of standards committees and will therefore form a useful background of jurisprudence for members to have reference to. I am therefore presenting at this meeting a report on cases decided by the Adjudication Panel since the last meeting of the committee. If members are happy with this approach I shall continue to produce such a report at each committee meeting.
10. I attach a draft work programme for the remainder of the council year. In November it is proposed that the Committee should consider the Council order of business on its agendas and determine whether any suggested amendments could be made thereto. It may be helpful for members and officers to have a feedback from those involved in investigations (whether as a complainant or subject member) and I propose therefore that consideration is given to a satisfaction feedback questionnaire. Richard Auty will give a report informing members what training is available for chairmen of committees and members. In January it is proposed to consider what

assistance the Committee can be to parishes within the district, to consider whether a branding exercise with regard to the Committee may assist in promoting standards and to receive a report from Richard Auty on communications. In March I propose presenting a report on how confidential information should be dealt with, with a view to members giving guidance and/or suggesting training for members of the council and Richard Auty will present a further report on promoting democracy.

11. It is of course open to members to add additional items or remove topics as they wish.

Risk Analysis

12. There are no risks associated with this report.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

Meeting	Topics to be covered
21 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work programme▪ Probity in Planning▪ Working in Partnership and Standards▪ Adjudication Panel update
23 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Order of Council agenda▪ Satisfaction feedback questionnaire▪ Chairman and Member training (Richard Auty)▪ Adjudication Panel update
25 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assistance to Parishes▪ “Branding” the Standards Committee▪ Communications (Richard Auty)▪ Adjudication Panel update
22 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Confidential Information▪ Promoting democracy (Richard Auty)▪ Adjudication Panel update