



Leicester
City Council

Standards Committee

10th September 2008

Standards Activities 2008/09

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose

This report draws together various strands of work relating to standards and ethical governance for members. It draws on recommendations from the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and summarises Standards activities included in the Good Governance in Local Government Audit. It is proposed that all of this form the work programme of the Standards Committee.

2. Recommendation

Members are asked to:-

- a) note the recommendations from the Council's CPA report relating to the Standards Committee;
- b) note the "Good Governance in Local Government" action plan summary containing items relating to the Standards Committee;
- c) consider how best to develop the initiatives into a work programme for the committee.

3. Report

The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection of the council, carried out in February 2008 identified 2 areas for improvement for the Standards Committee. These related to a) the makeup of the Standards Committee and b) the approach to training and awareness of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. The full recommendations are included as appendix 1.

4. Standards Committee

At the Annual Meeting of Council in May, it was agreed to change the make up of the Standards Committee. The membership was increased from 6 to 9, including 3 independent members. Elected members reflect all facets of council life including the cabinet, scrutiny, whips and minority leadership. This has enabled

wider debate and has also ensured sufficient members to deal with complaints against members through the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee.

Over half of the councillors have attended workshops on the Council's Code of Conduct, with others having received individual briefings. The Cabinet also received a presentation on the Code of Conduct in July and further sessions are being planned for other members. Three of the political groups have also received a presentation on the new process for dealing with complaints against members, with the 4th group having received a briefing note. As a result of the presentations to groups a report will now go to Cabinet and Council.

5. Good Governance Audit

The Good Governance Audit gave an opportunity to demonstrate a number of activities which are being undertaken on standards and ethical governance, eg mandatory training for members of regulatory committees, revision of the Members' Register of Interests, review of the political conventions. A summary is included as appendix 2.

6. Work Programme

It is proposed that the activities included in the Good Governance Audit be used to form the basis of a work programme of the Standards Committee. If agreed, the work programme would then become a live document, rolling forward every meeting. New items and initiatives would be added as they arose, or were requested by the Committee, thereby giving a clear direction through the year. A draft will be tabled at the meeting.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

Financial

Any budget implications will be met from existing budgets.

Legal

The legal implications are covered in the body of the report.(Peter Nicholls, Service Director and Head of Legal Services).

8. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References within this Report
Equal Opportunities	No	
Policy	Yes	throughout
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

9. Background Papers

Leicester City Council Comprehensive Assessment Report, Audit Commission, June 08

Good Governance in Local Government, Report to Cabinet, July 08

10. Consultations

None

11. Report Author

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Audit Commission Corporate Assessment

Leicester City Council

Extract from report of issues relating to the Standards Committee

Areas for improvement

Paragraph 16

The Council should strengthen the transparency and accountability of decision making. The role of the Standards Committee, Monitoring Officer and Leader in setting and maintaining the highest standards of ethical governance should be clarified and a more proactive approach taken to training and developing councillors and staff in modern corporate governance. The Council should consider whether some training such as on the Council's Code of Conduct should be mandatory. Some practices such as Cabinet members also being members of regulatory committees should be discontinued immediately. Such measures will help to reinforce the Council's standing in the community and demonstrate effective and confident community leadership.

What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

Paragraph 54

The Council's application of the ethical governance framework and standards is unsatisfactory. The promotion, application and monitoring of standards has a low profile. The Council has a significant number of new councillors who have been offered standards training and drop in 'surgeries'. However code of conduct training is not compulsory and few councillors have attended. The Standards Committee and monitoring officer provide some training, advice and assistance to councillors on the ethical framework but this is not a proactive approach. The Standards Committee has an independent chair, with two additional independent lay people making up half of the committee. However, the remaining three members are the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups, and deputy leader of the controlling Labour group. As these are all high profile councillors and therefore more likely to be the subject of complaints, this move is inadvisable and could expose the Council to risk and challenge to the credibility of the Committee.

on purpose with clearly defined functions and roles					
gation e al	New delegation scheme approved by Cabinet + Council June 08	Scheme to be implemented + monitored	Chief Executive (CX) Monitoring Officer	Copy of report to council	June 2008
ective ing n and nd					
ons for nd cture cluding nel (if	Independent Members Remuneration Panel meets annually to recommend Members Allowance Scheme	2007/08 scheme to be reviewed September 08	Service Director (Dem Serv)	Report to Council Oct 07	Oct 08

values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

e of	A Code of Conduct is in place and 'One Leicester' sets out the culture for public services aspired to by the Council and its partners	Deliver a programme of elected member, management and partner development in the context of 'Transforming Leicester City Council'		Corporate Governance Code adopted in May 2002 has been updated in 2008 to comply with CIPFA/SOLACE 2007 Guidance	July 08
duct d of een the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop training offered on revised code of conduct for members + officers. ▪ Member Development Forum producing Member Training Strategy to ensure capacity and capability of members to undertake their varying role. ▪ Political conventions in place. <p>Joint members/officer training undertaken in regulatory functions on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Continuation of member training on regulatory functions + code of conduct.</p> <p>Presentations to Cabinet Political Groups on Standards Committee issues.</p> <p>Members to be offered skills assessments + personal development plans.</p> <p>Revision of Political Conventions</p> <p>Production of joint members/officer scenario workshops</p>	<p>Service Director Dem Serv</p> <p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Service Director Dem Serv</p> <p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Service Director Dem Serv</p>	<p>Completed programme of workshop with attendances.</p> <p>Strategy to go to Cabinet Sept 08.</p> <p>Political Conventions</p> <p>Completed programme of workshops with attendances</p>	<p>Sept 08</p> <p>Dec 08</p>
ensure the rest in s and es to rate in	<p>As above</p> <p>Code of conduct for Development Control Decisions</p> <p>Information sessions for Members on bias + predetermination</p>	Regular update sessions offered to members	Service Director/Monitoring Officer	Copy of code	Ongoing

Subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.					
<p>ective es nces all and n it is</p>	<p>Revised Scrutiny arrangements were put in place in 2007</p> <p>Main scrutiny committee has lead senior officer</p>	<p>Reconsider arrangements in light of 'One Leicester' and the revised organisational structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Development Plan being developed following review of revised procedures • Informal overview + Scrutiny Forum to be launched • Develop Annual work programmes for Scrutiny committees 	<p>ICX</p> <p>Service Director Dem Services</p> <p>Service Director Dem Services</p> <p>Service Director Dem Services</p>	<p>Taking Scrutiny Forward – report to Council - Mayor</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct 08</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>nd enting ding erations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of council, cabinet, scrutiny + regulatory committees produced according to statutory requirements • Decisions delegated to officers + members are recorded + reported to Cabinet 		<p>Service Director Dem Services</p>	<p>Copies of minutes + reports</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>ees ut in nsure practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of members interests • Gifts, Hospitality Register for Members • Same for Officers 	<p>Update Registers regularly</p>	<p>Service Director Dem Services</p>	<p>Copy of registers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>rent e in .</p>					
<p>ments o which acting y have</p>	<p>Whistle blowing policy introduced in Nov. 2005. New policy subject to formal agreement to reflect concern raised by external audit.</p>	<p>Activities to refresh awareness of the policy are being considered as part of 08/09 work plan</p>	<p>Service Director Business Development</p>	<p>Policy is posted on internet and intranet</p>	<p>08/09?</p>
Officers to be effective.					
<p>s fficers regular</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Induction programmes are provided for both elected members and officers. ▪ Members development Forum operational as the vehicle to address strategic training and development of members 	<p>See 3.1</p> <p>Producing member training strategy to ensure capacity & capability of members to undertake their varying roles</p>	<p>Service Director Dem Services</p>	<p>Strategy report going to Cabinet September 29th</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>ers pport in their perly rity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop training offered on revised 'Code of Conduct' for members. ▪ Annual training on regulatory functions (compulsory for all members on committees) 		<p>Peter Nichols, Service Director, Legal Services</p>	<p>Copy of Member Development Forum notes outlining plans for 2011 Induction based on evaluation of 2007 programme</p>	