

# Constitution and Standards Committee

Friday 12 October 2018

10.00 am Luttrell Room - County Hall,  
Taunton



To: The Members of the Constitution and Standards Committee

Cllr W Wallace (Chair), Cllr M Best, Cllr H Davies, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr D Loveridge,  
Vicky Chapman, Robin Horton, Janice Middleton, Tim Ward and Wesley Wooding

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 4 October 2018

For further information about the meeting, please contact Katherine Dunn or Scott Wooldridge  
or 01823 357628 or [kydunn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:kydunn@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution  
under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to  
the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different  
languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on  
[www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)



**RNID typetalk**

# AGENDA

Item Constitution and Standards Committee - 10.00 am Friday 12 October 2018

**\* Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe \***

1 **Apologies for absence**

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

3 **Minutes from the previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. Questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting will be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

5 **Electoral Division name change proposals - proposed change to the name of the Wellington Electoral Division** (Pages 11 - 14)

6 **Whistleblowing Policy** (Pages 15 - 28)

7 **Update on Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks for elected members** (Pages 29 - 32)

8 **Review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements** (Pages 33 - 36)

9 **Forward Work Programme** (Pages 37 - 40)

10 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

## THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

### IMPORTANT NOTE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Council in support of the principles of openness and transparency allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public providing it is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone who wishes to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording will take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY 01823 357628 or email [swouldridge@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:swouldridge@somerset.gov.uk) so that the Chair of the meeting can inform those present.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance

#### **1. Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Scott Wooldridge (contact details above).

#### **2. Notes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Scott Wooldridge (contact details as above)

### 3. **Public Question Time**

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments, or send in a written question about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed.

Any person wishing to raise a matter under public question time must inform the meeting administrator ( Scott Wooldridge – contact details as above) by 12 noon **the (working) day before** the meeting.

### 4. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, members of the public are requested to leave the building via the signposted emergency exit, and proceed to the collection area outside Shire Hall. Officers and Members will be on hand to assist.

### 5. **Members' Code of Conduct Requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: HONESTY; INTEGRITY; SELFLESSNESS; OBJECTIVITY; ACCOUNTABILITY; OPENNESS; LEADERSHIP. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>



33.2 The following points were raised during discussion:

- Cllr Munt asked if the Wellington and Rockwell Green proposal (as it had been supported by Wellington Town Council) could have further consultation to establish wider public support for the name change before this is considered at a special meeting of Council.
- The Committee supported the proposal for further consultation to take place for the Wellington and Rockwell Green proposal and supported the proposal that the 3 other electoral division names will remain unchanged.

33.3 The Committee recommended:

1. that the Wellington and Rockwell Green proposed name change undertakes further public consultation and for proposals to be reported back to the Committee in the Autumn.
2. That currently no changes are taken forward for the other 3 proposals.

34 **UPDATE ON DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS – Agenda Item 6**

34.1 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

34.2 Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer, introduced the report by outlining the following key points:

- Item 3.5 outlined the number of County Councillors that had completed the relevant checks and the number of outstanding checks still to be completed.
- A plan to complete the outstanding checks had been developed and it is intended to then report back to the October meeting.

34.3 During discussion members highlighted the importance of the necessary checks being completed by all members in accordance with council policy and if necessary the Committee would escalate this matter.

Following debate, the Committee:

(a) noted the current position regarding County Councillor DBS checks as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

(b) Requested officers to provide a further update to the committees meeting in October 2018 and consider any further actions to ensure compliance with the Councils policies on DBS checks.

35 **EMPOWERMENT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE – agenda Item 7**

35.1 The report recommended a way forward to ensure that the statutory Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) role is fulfilled by the new Interim Director of Finance, who is an interim agency placement filling this key post within the Senior Leadership Team following the departure of the Director of Finance, Legal and Governance on 11 July 2018. It also proposed that the Interim Director is empowered to take decisions under the Council and Cabinet Schemes of Delegation and therefore be held fully accountable in the role that they are undertaking on a contractual basis.

35.2 Scott Wooldridge, advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Council's agreement to empower the interim director is given delegated powers to undertake the statutory role of the 151 officer.

35.3 The following points were raised during discussion:

- Cllr Munt asked about the legal position regarding the empowerment of a contracted individual to undertake the statutory role. The County Solicitor referred to the position outlined in the report.
- Questions were raised about the context for the council employing an external person to undertaken the interim director role.

35.4 The Committee resolved to:

1. Recommend that the County Council allocate the statutory Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) role to the Interim Director of Finance with effect from the 18 July 2018 pending the recruitment of a permanent employee to the role of Corporate Director for Resources.
2. Agree, subject to the agreement of the Council to (1) above to amend the Constitution and Council Scheme of Delegation to recognise and empower the Interim Director of Finance to undertake all of the statutory functions of a Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 officer), the functions of the Director of Finance, Legal and Governance and take all decisions related to the role;
3. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any changes necessary to the Constitution as a result of the decisions of the Council and the Committee.
4. Recommend the Leader to make complementary changes to those outlined in 2.1 (2) above to the Cabinet Scheme of Delegation.

36 **MEETING PROCEDURE RULES, SCRUTINY CALL-IN PROCEDURE AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME RULES – Item 8**

36.1 The report set out proposals for the Committee to consider regarding revisions to the Full Council meeting procedure rules, the scrutiny committees' call-in procedure rules and the public question time rules within the Constitution.

The proposals responded to recommendations from the recent Corporate Peer Challenge, attempted to equalise across the Council's committee meetings the public question time rules relating to deadlines for submitting statements and the time allocated to speakers, and clarify the existing public question time provisions to ensure that the time reserved for public statements and questions is maximised and not limited by repeated questions or statements that have been raised at the council's committee meetings in the past six months.

36.2 Scott Wooldridge, introduced the report by outlining the following key points:

- The Council remains committed to public participation in its committee meetings.
- Members are given appropriate time to engage and debate and to ask questions.
- Committee meetings are not the sole body for public consultation and there are a number of ways that the public can engage before it is taken to committees.
- Looked at other Councils and examples included
  - Devon County Council allow public speakers to submit just 1 question and these have to be registered 4 days in advance.
  - Sedgemoor District Council allow 1 question and 15 minutes of public question time.
- There are different rules for different Council committees, therefore there is a lack of consistency throughout.
- There are occasions where late papers have to be generated - item 3.4 talks about how this can be adhered to democratically.
- Item 3.8 asks that only one question is asked by individuals – this does not mean that questions will not be asked but it shows speaking allocation and how this will be managed at individual meetings.

36.3 Nigel Behan, Unite Branch Secretary asked questions and made statements regarding:

- Whether the Committee felt the proposals were too restrictive
- Limiting questions to one per speaker could result in less questioning of the Council. Complex services and budget papers contain much information to be analysed which is very difficult to do in one question which could lead to less transparency and possibly more Freedom of Information requests.



- whether consideration had been given to questions submitted on behalf of organisations
- previous some questions have been grouped by the Chair to facilitate particular areas of interest without unnecessary duplication
- whether the proposals could be deferred to allow the public to have a greater say on the proposed changes

36.4 The questions were answered by Scott Wooldridge:

- The proposals have taken into view what other councils do.
- The council needs to strike an appropriate balance between public and member participation at committee meetings.
- Committee is being consulted on the proposals prior to these being presented to the July council meeting.

36.5 The following points were raised during discussion:

- 3.1 33 – Cllr Munt stated that the current provision in the Constitution of 20 minutes for public question time is not appropriate especially for Regulation Committee. It was clarified that the Chair has discretion to extend the time.
- 3.2.2 – late questions – it was requested whether another member of the public or officer could read out a question if the person asking it is absent.
- With late questions – unless there is a good reason why they are late the Chair will reject them.
- In response to the Peer Review recommendations the report includes a proposal to delete the Vice-Chair from the need to agree a scrutiny call-in request.
- Cllr Munt highlighted that Scrutiny Place now has a chair and vice chair that are both conservative members rather than the previous practice of being from opposition parties. It was clarified that this is still allowed legally and is a matter for Full Council to decide.
- It was suggested that co-opted members should be considered for all Scrutiny committees.

36.6 The committee resolved to:

1) Accept the proposals regarding the proposed amendments to the Full Council meeting procedure rules and Public Question Time provisions within the Constitution as set out in paragraph 3.1-3.12 of the report, ahead of the Monitoring Officer reporting these for consideration and approval by Full Council on 18 July 2018 with the following amendments:

- (i) The time allocation for Public Question Time should be 20 minutes or at the discretion of the chair of the committee.
- (ii) If the person is absent and therefore unable to ask a question the relevant democratic service manager can do so on his/her behalf.

2) Accept the proposals regarding the proposed amendment to the scrutiny call-in procedure as set out in paragraph 3.16, ahead of the Monitoring Officer reporting this for consideration and approval by Full

Council on 18 July 2018.

3) Noted the work to be undertaken investigating options to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny.

**37.0 AUDIO RECORDINGS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS – Item 9**

37.1 The Monitoring Officer referred the Committee to the copy of the extract from the Constitution (as agreed in May 2018) regarding the provisions relating to the council's audio recording of its main decision making meetings

37.2 The following points were raised during discussion:

- The Audio recording procedures are now in place.
- Request for the recording protocol to be reviewed by the Committee as part of the annual review of the Constitution.
- Audio recordings are put on the website for a number of meetings but then are withdrawn after a point when the minutes have been signed as they are the accurate record of the meeting.

The Committee noted the update and requested a further update in the Autumn regarding the operation of the policy.

**38.0 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – Item 10**

38.1 The Monitoring Officer reported on the proposed future work programme and that this will be a standing item for each meeting:

12<sup>th</sup> October  
Whistle Blowing Report  
Wellington and Rockwell Green

1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 – Officer code of conduct.

**39.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY – agenda item 11**

39.1 The Chairman advised there were no other urgent items of business, he thanked all those present for attending the meeting and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

**The meeting ended at 12.05**

**Cllr William Wallace  
Chair of  
Constitution and Standards Committee**

## **Electoral Division name change proposals – proposed change to the name of the Wellington Electoral Division**

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Manager - Governance & Risk

Report author: Julian Gale, Strategic Manager – Partnership Governance

Contact Details: 01823 359500

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1** At the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018 meeting of the Committee, members considered the outcomes of the public consultation process on proposed changes to the names of 4 electoral divisions. The public consultation process on the proposed changes had previously been agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Based on the outcomes of the public consultation process, the Committee did not feel able to support 3 of the 4 proposals. The only proposal which the Committee considered should be considered was the change of name from 'Wellington' to 'Wellington and Rockwell Green'. This followed receipt of a single response from the Wellington area but it was from a key local organisation – Wellington Town Council. The Council expressed strong support for the proposal.
- 1.2** Although the Committee indicated at the July meeting that it was prepared to consider supporting the Wellington and Rockwell Green proposal based on this single response, officers were asked to undertake a further round of public consultation on the proposal to see if any other local support could be established for the proposal. This report sets out the outcome of that process.
- 1.3** This report doesn't cover the other 3 electoral division name changes that were originally proposed as the Committee at its last meeting agreed not to recommend any changes to Council for consideration on the back of the consultation exercise. The Committee's conclusions on these proposals will be reported to Full Council for information.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** **The Committee is asked to consider the outcome of the further round of consultation and decide whether to recommend the Council to approve the change in the name of the Wellington Electoral Division to Wellington and Rockwell Green Electoral Division.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1.** Previous reports have outlined the process for the Council to consider making changes to the names of electoral divisions where the Council considers that the name doesn't adequately identify with the area covered. Under the legislation the Council has the power to amend electoral division names, subject to meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

- 3.2.** The Act requires the Council to consult on a proposed change and then confirm the change at a special Full Council meeting 'specially convened for the purpose'. A change must be supported by a majority of at least two thirds of the members voting.
- 3.3.** Once a decision is taken the Council must notify the change to various agencies and the change of name only take effects when the Electoral Commission has given notice of the change.

#### **4. Consultation outcomes**

- 4.1** The further consultation process was undertaken by the local member Cllr Andrew Govier amongst local agencies and organisations. In terms of responses:
- Wellington Town Council has reaffirmed its strong support for the proposed change through a further email
  - The Team Rector of the Wellington & District Team Ministry has written in support of the proposal. He represents a group of 13 Church of England parishes in Wellington and the surrounding area so including both Wellington and Rockwell Green. His view is that the new title is appropriate as it expresses accurately how local people view the community they live in, Rockwell Green being a distinct community within the wider town of Wellington.
  - The Leader of Rockwell Green Christian Fellowship has also written in support of the change.
  - One Team Co-ordinator for Wellington has written to confirm full support of the change to better reflect the current make-up of the electoral division.
  - The Acting Headteacher of Rockwell Green Primary School has written in support of the change to properly recognise the community of Rockwell Green. The community is very proud of its village status.
- 4.2** Conclusion. Although the response rate is still low several key local organisations and/or representatives of such organisations have now written in support and these responses back up the strong support given by the Town Council. It would suggest that the change makes sense from the point of view of these key groups within the local community and would reflect the Rockwell Green's significant population and distinctiveness. The Committee may therefore feel that this is sufficient to confirm its earlier view in support of the proposal and make a recommendation to the Council to approve the change of name.

#### **5. Consultations undertaken**

- 5.1 As detailed in the report.

#### **6. Implications**

- 6.1 Legal: The legal implications are detailed in the report.

- 6.2 Financial: As detailed in the report
- 6.3 Business risk: Not applicable.
- 6.4 Impact Assessment: There are no direct impacts on any of the protected characteristics falling under the definition of the equalities legislation or the local additional protected characteristics adopted by the Council. There are also no direct impacts in other impact assessment categories of community safety, sustainability or privacy.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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Somerset County Council  
Constitution and Standards Committee  
12<sup>th</sup> October 2018

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## **Whistleblowing Policy**

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance & Risk & Monitoring Officer

Report author: Julian Gale, Strategic Manager – Partnerships Governance

Contact Details: 01823 359500

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report is designed to familiarise the Committee with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and to ask for support for a focused piece of work with Senior Leadership Team and other staff to assess awareness of the Policy and its use.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. **The Committee is asked to confirm support for the Policy and the action proposed within the report to review the operation of the Policy.**

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1 Whistleblowing Policy**

- 3.1.1 The Committee has overall responsibility for the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. The current policy dates from 2016 when updated and approved by the Standards Committee. Regular checks have been made over the years to ensure that the Policy is compliant with the legislation and the Policy agreed in 2016 met these requirements. As part of the work detailed in this report a further compliance check will be made to ensure that the Policy remains appropriate. There is no suggestion at this stage that the Policy is not compliant.
- 3.1.2 The changes made to the Policy in 2016 simplified the content. The Policy is available on the Council's Intranet site and is attached as the Appendix to this report.
- 3.1.3 The focus of the policy is to ensure that anyone working for the Council (and not just contracted members of staff) feels comfortable and protected in raising a complaint against an employee within the Council and without the need to 'blow the whistle' outside of the Council. The policy includes protections and guarantees to this effect. It also sets out the categories of complaints that can be raised under the Policy.
- 3.1.4 The Policy includes of avenues inside and outside of the Council whereby a member of staff can seek confidential advice when deciding if and how to make a complaint. It also sets out the process for how the Council will respond to the complaint including timelines and how the complaint will be dealt with which will depend on the circumstances of the complaint.

## 4. Operation of the Policy

### 4.1 Further work is required in the following areas:

1. Awareness of the Policy: It is proposed to undertake work with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to assess knowledge of the Policy amongst senior staff. Cases in which the Monitoring Officer has been involved and registered details of complaints have been properly handled under the Policy and have given no causes for concern. However, we need to ensure that we have a complete picture of whistleblowing complaints dealt with across the Council, hence the need for further work. Work will be undertaken with HR colleagues to put in place steps to ensure that the policy is advertised appropriately within the organisation to raise awareness amongst those working for the Council and linking with the work on the Leadership Competency Framework – see 3 below. This includes a review of the Council’s staff induction processes and the treatment of whistleblowing.
2. Numbers of complaints. Numbers of complaints made known to the Monitoring Officer are at a low level. This amounts to 7 over the last 3 years and includes 4 significant fraud cases. Further work needs to be done to establish that this is a true figure across the Council and ensure that adequate records are being kept of complaints to enable lessons to be learnt. It is possible that whistleblowing complaints have been dealt with within services and without the knowledge / involvement of the Monitoring Officer or HR. Learning from complaints is important and the recent cluster of fraud cases raised some important issues. In respect of the fraud cases there have been briefings for senior managers on the lessons coming out of these complaints.
3. This work will link well with the proposal to develop an Officers’ Code of Conduct for inclusion in the Constitution. We are also implementing a Leadership Competency Framework, which sets out the behaviours and attributes expected of staff at all levels of the organisation. This includes areas such as Self Awareness & Self-Management, Personal Integrity & Role Modelling, Leading Change Through People, Holding to Account, Empowering Others and Working Effectively with Others. This work will directly support greater awareness of standards of conduct required of staff, the whistleblowing policy and individual and organisational responses to cases.

## 4. Consultation

- 4.1 SLT and HR colleagues will be involved in the review. A further report will be made to the Committee upon the completion of the review outlined above.

## 5. Implications

- 5.1 **Financial:** There are no costs associated with the review proposed in this report beyond officer time required to undertake the work.
- 5.2 **Legal:** As detailed in the report.
- 5.3 **Impact Assessment:** The Council’s duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have “due regard” to the matters set out in relation to equalities when



considering and making decisions on the provision of services. There are no direct impacts of the report's recommendations on the provision of services. There are no direct impacts on sustainability, health and safety, community safety or privacy aspects as a result of these proposals.

- 5.4 Business Risk:** There are no specific business risks arising to the Council from this report. Having an effective Whistleblowing Policy in place helps to reduce risks within the Council by allowing poor or fraudulent practice to be identified and dealt with.

## **6. Background papers**

- 6.1.** None

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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## **Somerset County Council**

### **A Quick Reference Guide to the Whistleblowing Policy**

#### **1 What is Whistleblowing?**

1.1 Whistleblowing is when an employee raises a concern within the Council in relation to an alleged wrongdoing, including suspected misconduct, illegal acts or a failure to act.

1.2 Whistleblowing is a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to the Council's efficiency and success. It is not viewed as disloyal to colleagues or to the Council to speak up in respect of concerns.

1.3 To be considered as whistleblowing, the employee making the disclosure must reasonably believe two things;

- a) They are acting in the public interest
- b) That the whistleblowing tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one of the following categories;
  - Criminal offences
  - Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law
  - Miscarriages of justice
  - Endangering of someone's health and safety
  - Damage to the environment
  - Covering up wrongdoing in any of the above categories

#### **2 What is the aim of the policy and this initial quick guide?**

2.1 This quick guide sets out the key elements of the full policy which can be found at \*\*\*\*\*. The intention is that you can raise a concern under 1.3 b) above without fear of victimisation, discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.

2.2 If you are concerned about your own treatment as an employee, you should raise this under the Council's grievance procedures. These can be found under the HR section of the intranet.

#### **3 What protection is there for the whistleblower?**

3.1 The Council's policy reflects the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers making such disclosures, when these disclosures are made in accordance with the provisions of the 1998 Act and are made in good faith (this means where you reasonably believe the allegations to be true, as

opposed to where the allegations are frivolous, malicious or for your personal gain). It is unlawful for the Council to dismiss anyone, or allow them to be victimised or discriminated against, on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act.

3.2 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity, if this is your wish. In certain matters you may be asked to come forward as a witness, if you agree to this you will receive support and advice. In certain circumstances, such as serious safeguarding disclosures or criminal matters, it may not be possible to protect your anonymity or avoid you being called as a witness.

#### 4 How do I raise a concern?

4.1 You can raise concerns with the officers listed below. If your concerns relate to your line manager or a senior officer in your directorate, there are other officers to whom you can report your concerns as set out below.

- Your Line Manager
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team (who you don't think is involved);
- The Finance and Performance Director;
- The HR and Organisational Development Director;
- The Strategic Manager - Finance Governance,

4.2 You may also raise a concern confidentially with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, as a point of entry into the Whistleblowing policy.

4.3 If these channels have been followed but you continue to have concerns or believe that those listed above are implicated, then you should approach one of the following:

- The Chief Executive;
- The Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk (who is also the Council's Monitoring Officer);
- The County Solicitor (who is also the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer).

4.4 You can raise a concern by telephone, in person or in writing. A written record is recommended in order that you can fully reflect the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true and to give a background and history of the concern with relevant dates if possible.

#### 5 How the Council will respond to your concern?

5.1 The Council will respond to your concerns as quickly as possible. The overriding principle for the Council is that of the public interest. Initial inquiries

APPENDIX

will lead to a decision as to whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take. The amount of contact between you and the officers considering the issues in the matter will depend on the nature of the issues involved.

5.2 The Council will obviously do what it can to minimise any difficulties that you may experience. You can expect that the Council will feedback the results of its inquiries and any subsequent investigation, subject to any legal limitations on disclosing any information or outcome

## Whistleblowing Policy

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### Introduction

Somerset County Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we wish to encourage employees, and other workers within the Council, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Council. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns within the Council rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. The policy makes it clear that employees can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The Council is committed to listening to concerns, taking them seriously and ensuring that they are dealt with promptly and fairly.

The policy applies to all employees and individuals working for the Council on our premises, for example agency staff, trainees on vocational/work experience, consultants, builders, and drivers. Council employees can also

use the policy to raise concerns about suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Council in their own premises, for example, care homes.

The policy is in addition to the Council's Complaints Procedure and other statutory reporting procedures applying to some service areas.

There is a Grievance Procedure in place for employees to raise a concern relating to their own employment. The policy is based on the Department for Business Innovation & Skills: Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice and has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.

In addition to the Council's commitment to protect employees who raise concerns, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides a worker with potential protection from detriment and dismissal for making a 'qualifying disclosure'. The Act encourages workers to raise matters internally with employers and where an internal Whistleblowing Policy exists, it steers the worker to use this. (Please note: there are legal requirements for 'qualifying disclosures' to be protected under the Act). In addition, an employee who raises a concern under this policy and reasonably believes the disclosure is in the public interest, will be protected from any claim of defamation by the Council's insurance policy.

### **Aims and Scope of the Policy**

This policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied;
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure you have made to be in the public interest.

This policy is intended to cover major concerns reasonably believed to be in the public interest in one or more of the following categories:

- Criminal offences, for example, fraud, theft, physical or sexual abuse
- Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law
- Miscarriages of justice

- Endangering of someone's health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

Thus, serious concerns which you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. This may be something that:

- makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the Council subscribes to; or
- is against the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and policies; or
- falls below established professional standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

### **How to Raise a Concern**

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their line manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management (a member or members of the Senior Leadership Team) is involved, you should approach one of the following:

- a member of the Senior Leadership Team (who you don't think is involved); or
- the Finance and Performance Director; or
- the HR and Organisational Development Director; or
- the Strategic Manager - Finance Governance.

You may also raise a concern confidentially with the Chair of the Constitution and Standards Committee who will act as a point of entry into the Whistleblowing scheme. The Chair will record the concern and refer the matter to the most appropriate nominated officer. In such circumstances, the investigating officer will report progress to the elected member as well as to the nominated officer.

If these channels have been followed but you continue to have concerns or believe that those listed above are implicated then you should approach one of the following:

- The Chief Executive; or



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- The Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk (who is also the Council's Monitoring Officer); or
- The County Solicitor (who is also the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer).

Concerns may be raised by telephone, in person or in writing. Making and submitting a written record of the concern is recommended as details of the background and history of the concern (including names, dates, etc) are necessary in order to investigate a concern together with the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. When raising a concern, you must declare any personal interest you have in the matter.

The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for a concern. However, you must not attempt to investigate a concern or accuse individuals directly.

Advice and guidance on how to pursue matters of concern may be obtained from:

- HR Advisory Service;
- Officers within Internal Audit (Southwest Audit Partnership), Finance (01823 355299);
- The County Solicitor (01823) 355022; or
- Your trade union/professional association representative.

You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

You may invite your trade union/professional association representative or work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised. Meetings can be arranged off-site if you wish.

### **How the Council will Respond**

The Council will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

The action taken by the Council will depend on the nature of the concern. Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- be investigated by management or internal audit;
- be referred to the Police;

- be referred to an external auditor;
- form the subject of an independent inquiry;
- be dealt with under a more appropriate Council procedure.

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the Council will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues or financial irregularities) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within ten working days, the officer with whom you raised the concern will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how they propose to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made
- supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

The Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if you are required to give evidence the Council will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure from a nominated officer, usually someone from HR or legal.

The Council accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed and you will be informed of the final outcome of the investigation. In some circumstances, however, it may not be possible to reveal the full details where this relates to personal issues involving a third party or legal constraints.

If you make an allegation that you reasonably believe is in the public interest but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you.

### **How the Matter can be taken Further**

This policy is intended to help you raise concerns you may have within the Council. Hopefully, you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, there are other people you can contact and these are:

- the External Auditor;
- your trade union/professional association;
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations (for example Health and Safety Executive) there is a list of prescribed persons and bodies on the HR Extranet site;
- the Police;
- your own solicitor.

If you do take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not misuse confidential information. The person you contact should be able to advise you on this.

The policy, in line with the legislation, provides protection for employees who raise concerns internally. It is inconsistent with the satisfactory operation of the policy to pursue such concerns with the media (newspapers, TV, radio, etc) and employees who do so are unlikely to be protected by the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

Concerns expressed anonymously or through a third party are much less powerful and may not be possible to investigate. The officer to whom the concern is initially reported will discuss it with the Council's Monitoring Officer, and it will be at their joint discretion as to whether the concern will be considered further.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **Harassment or Victimisation**

The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. However, you have a responsibility to the Council and to those for whom you are providing a service to raise serious concerns using the approach outlined in this policy.

The Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern where you reasonably believe the disclosure is in the public interest.

Disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they try to stop you from raising a concern or if an employee is responsible for any act of retribution against you for raising a concern.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. It must be appreciated, however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information, and that a statement may be required as part of the evidence and/or you may be asked to come forward as a witness at the appropriate time. In certain circumstances, depending on the nature of the disclosure, the Council cannot guarantee that your identity can remain anonymous.

### **False Allegations**

If an allegation is knowingly made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

### **The Responsible Officer**

The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for monitoring the policy and will report annually to the Council's Standards Committee on the operation of the policy.

### **Review**

The policy will be kept under review and as a result may be subject to amendment.

## **Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Update**

Lead Officer& Author: Jamie Jackson, Deputy Strategic Manager – Democratic Services

Contact Details: 01823 359040

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
- 1.2. This report updates the Committee on the Council's progress in securing Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks for County Councillors following revisions to the policy agreed at Full Council on 29 November 2017 and a previous update provided to the Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. **The Committee is asked to note the current position regarding County Councillor DBS checks as detailed in paragraph 3.5.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The DBS is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Home Office. It was formed in 2012 by the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau ("CRB") and the Independent Safeguarding Authority ("ISA") under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 which made changes to the arrangements for carrying out criminal records checks. The DBS provides access to criminal records and other relevant information for organisations in England and Wales and is also responsible for investigating safeguarding concerns and maintaining the barred lists for Children and Adults and the combined list (these are statutory lists containing details of people considered unsuitable to work with children and/or adults).

There are various level of checks that can be applied for –

1. Basic disclosure certificate - shows any 'unspent convictions' someone may have in the UK. A basic disclosure shows a conviction record at a point in time, so there is no set time that it lasts for. Individuals can apply and pay for a basic Disclosure themselves. This is not the same as a DBS Standard check
2. Standard disclosure certificate - checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.
3. Enhanced disclosure certificate, this includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the role being applied for.
4. Enhanced disclosure certificate with barred list checks, this is like the enhanced check, but includes a check of the DBS barred lists. Under the

legislation no elected member would qualify for this level of check.

**3.2** Legislation in 2012 significantly amended definitions of regulated activities with children and adults which impacted on the legal position of DBS checks in relation to members. It is reasonable to say that the legislative requirements allow for a degree of interpretation and this has contributed to policy variations around the country. The position of elected members is not a standalone position listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. However the level of check that can be carried out will depend on the role that is being carried out. The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002 provides that a member or co-opted member will be undertaking regulated activity if they:

(a) discharge, as a result of their membership, any education or social services functions of the Council;

(b) are a Cabinet Member (the Cabinet discharges education and social services functions) (this can be further defined as ‘decision makers’);

(c) are a Member of a committee of the Cabinet (there are currently no such committees); or

(d) they are a Member of a committee of the Council which discharges education or social services functions. (NB In our opinion Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting Board members do not obviously come within this definition as they do not discharge a (decision-making) function).

Members falling under the above definition require an Enhanced DBS check and our view in the light of current practice and advice is that only Cabinet members qualify for certain for an Enhanced check.

**3.3** At the November 2017 Full Council meeting, Council unanimously agreed to extend the previous DBS policy to:

- Extend the mandatory requirement to have Enhanced DBS checks without barred list checks to: all Cabinet members; Junior Cabinet Members; members of the Adult and Children & Families Scrutiny Committees; members of the Adoption and Foster Panels; members of the Corporate Parents Board; and Members appointed to Panels or working groups relating to education or adult social care services.
- That all other members and co-opted members are required to undergo a Basic DBS check.
- That DBS checks required under (a) and (b) above will be carried out by the Council immediately following each Council election to ensure that such checks are renewed on a quadrennial basis.
- That the Monitoring Officer maintains a register of approved applications.

**3.4** These recommendations were based on our interpretation of the legislative requirements, some initial advice from the DBS service, emerging approaches of other councils and an assessment of the risks associated with the options

identified and explored.

### 3.5

As at 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 33 of the 55 County Councillors had completed a DBS Check, all of them at the Enhanced level due to the nature of their role at the time. These are detailed on a register of approved applications maintained by the Democratic Services team.

On 6<sup>th</sup> July the Committee was advised that following several amendments to the Scrutiny Committee Appointments and Memberships at May 2018 Full Council meeting, there were 4 Councillors who required an Enhanced Check as a matter of urgency in order to sit on the relevant Committee. These have all now been completed.

The remaining 18 County Councillors required a Basic DBS check, as none held any of the roles or sit on any of the Committees or Board as detailed in the first bullet point of paragraph 3.3.

A Basic DBS check requires access to an alternative system from the enhanced checks and two members of the Democratic Services team are now able to process and verify these applications. Of these 18 Members, 11 have now completed their DBS checks. The remaining 7 have open applications and the Members have been approached directly requesting the completion of the online application and to provide supporting documentation to the nominated verifiers. This is with the intention that all remaining 7 Councillors have received confirmation of an approved DBS application by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. **Other Points to Note**

### 3.6

DBS checks carried out by the Council are only relevant for members acting in their capacity as elected members. If members carry out roles outside of this capacity involving work with children or adults (for example, volunteering with the scout movement or in a children's centre), it is their responsibility to check with the relevant organisation regarding that organisation's own DBS checking requirements.

In seeking to identify the appropriate options to propose to members in relation to the undertaking of DBS checks the practice amongst other comparable councils has been explored. Interestingly, the LGA does not have a policy position on this and there are a range of practices in councils. Most councils undertake Enhanced checks for those members with what they have interpreted as qualifying roles. A minority widen the policy out to all members with requirements that are a mix of Enhanced and Basic checks.

Council also noted at its' meeting in November 2017 that once the amended policy was agreed any member who refuses a DBS check under the Council's policy will be in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct for failure to comply with Council policy and will be subject to a potential range of sanctions which can be imposed in these circumstances.

## 4. Implications

- 4.1. Legal & Risk: In addition to the legislative requirements outlined above, it is relevant to note that requiring an Enhanced check is a substantial

interference with a person's right to respect for private life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Either of the options set out in the paper put in place arrangements that will provide a level of assurance to Somerset residents that the Council is taking practical actions to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable young people and adults. To have no or inadequate arrangements in place would not enable the Council to give such assurance in relation to the protection of individuals this could harm the Council's reputation. However, it is worth reflecting that even if the DBS checks are in place, it only gives an assurance at a point in time and in relation to previous behaviour. They provide no guarantee of future behaviour.

- 4.2.** Financial: The cost of an Enhanced DBS is £44 and the Basic Disclosure is £25. The estimated cost of undertaking checks for all members and co-opted members is around £2000. The main part of this cost will be incurred on a quadrennial basis giving an annual cost of around £500. This cost should be capable of being met from within the Members' budget.

## **5. Background papers**

- 5.1.** None

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.



## **Review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements**

Lead Officer & Author: Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Manager - Governance & Risk

Contact Details: 01823 357628

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1** This report provides the committee with details of a review which is being undertaken of the Council's scrutiny arrangements and that any recommendations arising from that review will be reported to the Committee during Spring 2019.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** **The Committee is asked to note the review being undertaken of the Council's scrutiny arrangements and that it should receive a further report in Spring 2019 ahead of any recommendations being presented to the County Council meeting in May 2019.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1.** Overview and scrutiny committees were established in English and Welsh local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. They were intended as a counterweight to the new executive structures created by that Act (elected mayors or leaders and cabinets). Their role was to develop and review policy and make recommendations to the council. The legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees for England can be found in the Localism Act 2011.

Local authorities also manage processes of 'external scrutiny', where their committees look at issues which lie outside the council's responsibilities. Specific powers exist to scrutinise health bodies, crime and disorder partnerships, and Police and Crime Commissioners.

- 3.2.** Since 2001, Somerset County Council has operated overview and scrutiny arrangements in a number of forms. The current arrangements date from 2015, when the Council expanded its previous two scrutiny committees to three scrutiny committees as part of its democratic arrangements:
- Scrutiny Committee for Adults and Health
  - Scrutiny Committee for Children and Families
  - Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place

The committees typically meet every six weeks throughout the year and submit regular reports regarding the work that they have undertaken to every County Council meeting, as well as an annual report each May.

- 3.3.** Each committee comprises 9 elected members reflecting the political

composition of the Council. In addition, the membership of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee includes 3 co-opted church representatives, 2 co-opted parent governor representatives, and 1 representative each from the Schools Forum and the Schools Compact, all with voting rights (which are full voting rights) on educational matters only. The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members cannot be members of these committees.

- 3.4.** In respect of their functions, each committee :
- (a) Advises the Cabinet, on the formative stages of key service developments and reviews;
  - (b) Influences planned key decisions before they are taken;
  - (c) Holds Cabinet decision-makers (including Officers) to account for Key decisions.
  - (d) Questions members of the Cabinet and/or committees and senior officers about their decisions and performance standards
  - (e) Ensures that all the Council's performance management and assessment systems continually improve the Council's service delivery;
  - (f) Assists the Cabinet / Council in budget and policy development;
  - (g) Reviews delivery of key action plans (including external inspection action plans) and Council objectives through the achievement of outcomes;
  - (h) Considers any matter affecting the County of Somerset or its inhabitants (specifically children in the case of Scrutiny Children and Families);
  - (i) Ensures active engagement of Members, the public, media, stakeholders, partners and Officers in the work of the Council and the Committee and to enable the voice of the wider community to be heard within the Council;
  - (j) Makes reports and/or recommendations to the Full Council and/or the Cabinet, Council, other Committees and/or partner bodies;
  - (k) Scrutinises the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to discuss their activities and performance.

**3.5.** Review of scrutiny arrangements

The Council undertakes an annual review of its democratic arrangements and its Constitution to ensure they remain fit for purpose for the organisation and meet its legal duties. The review is reported to Constitution & Standards Committee for comments and endorsement prior to being approved by the County Council at its Annual General Meeting in May every year.

- 3.6.** The Communities and Local Government Committee published in December 2017 "the Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees", which sets out a number of recommendations for the Government to consider. The Government responded to the recommendations in March 2018.

- 3.7.** A Peer Challenge review of Somerset County Council was undertaken

with the Local Government Association and this was reported to the County Council meeting in May 2018. One of its recommendations to the Council was:

“Somerset County Council should review its overall approach to scrutiny, ensuring all councillors are equipped to play an active role and contribute to the policy making and key decisions affecting the future of Somerset’s residents and the council, and that its governance arrangements are reflective of this.”

- 3.8. The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have committed officer support to work with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three scrutiny committees to undertake a review of the council’s scrutiny arrangements with the aim of reporting to the County Council’s Annual General Meeting in May 2019. A scoping meeting was held in early July 2018 and there was a consensus of support for taking forward a review.
- 3.9. The Government is preparing new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government during October with the aim of publishing it in December 2018. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been commissioned by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to draft parts of the guidance.

The guidance will be statutory guidance, issued under section 9Q(1) of the Local Government Act 2000. This means that councils will have to “have regard to” the guidance in the way that they work and the decisions they make. The phrase “have regard to” has a particular legal meaning, which is essentially that a body subject to such guidance has to have a clear reason for departing from it.

- 3.10. Undertaking a review of this nature can be resource intensive and the Council is currently exploring the potential for the Centre for Public Scrutiny to assist Democratic Services officers with completing this review.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1 As detailed in the report.

#### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Legal: As stated in this report.
- 5.2 Financial: Any costs associated with the Centre for Public Scrutiny involvement would be intended to be subject to funding from the Local Government Association being in place.
- 5.3 Business risk: The involvement of Centre for Public Scrutiny is seen as a key part of the review.
- 5.4 Impact Assessment: There are no direct impacts on any of the protected characteristics falling under the definition of the equalities legislation or the local additional protected characteristics adopted by the Council. There are also no direct impacts in other impact assessment categories of community safety, sustainability or privacy.

## **6. Background Papers**

6.1 Peer Challenge review reported to County Council in May 2018

6.2 Council's Constitution

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

## Committee Forward Work Plan

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager – Governance & Risk  
Contact Details: tel (01823) 357628 or e-mail: swooldridge@somerset.gov.uk

### **1. Summary/link to the County Plan**

- 1.1. Members have asked that we review forthcoming items coming to Constitution and Standards Committee. A Forward Work Plan will be brought to each meeting for review and discussion to assist with planning business for future meetings.

### **2. Issues for consideration**

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the outline agendas for the next two committee meetings as set out in Appendix A to this report, and to comment on any further items that they would like to be scheduled at these or at future meetings.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. This item is designed to enable good planning and scheduling of business for committee meetings in order to make the best use of the available time and resources.

### **4. Implications**

- 4.1. Any items requested not yet covered by the Forward Work Plan at Appendix A will require scheduling by officers, in conjunction with the Chair.

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## **APPENDIX A : Constitution & Standards Committee Work Programme**

<b><u>Future Agenda Items</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>
<b><u>1 February 2019</u></b>	
Annual review of SCC Recording Protocol	To receive an update regarding the operation of the Council's policy for publishing audio recordings on its website
Annual review of Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders	To receive the annual review of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders and consider any recommendations
Annual review of Financial Regulations	To receive the annual review of the Financial Regulations and consider any recommendations
Officer Code of Conduct	To consider and approve for inclusion within the Constitution
<b><u>3 May 2019</u></b>	
Annual review of Democratic Arrangements	To receive the annual review of the Council's democratic arrangements, including receiving the review of the effective Scrutiny arrangements and consider any recommendations
Annual Review of the Council's Constitution	Report from the Monitoring Officer seeking views from the Committee regarding any proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution for consideration at Full Council AGM meeting in May 2019
DBS checks update	To receive an update regarding DBS checks for elected members in accordance with the Council's policy agreed in November 2017
Annual review of Committee's terms of reference	To review the Committee's terms of reference and consider any proposed changes to recommend to Full Council
<b><u>21 June 2019</u></b>	
Annual review of the Members Code of Conduct and annual report on complaints against County Councillors	To receive the annual review, an update on any national or local policy changes, and consider any recommendations. In addition, receive an annual report regarding complaints against County Councillors

Annual review of County Councillor Complaints Procedure	To receive the annual review and consider any recommendations
Annual Review of Code of Planning Practice	To receive the annual review and consider any recommendations
<b>11 October 2019</b>	
Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy	To receive the annual review report of this policy and consider any recommendations
Annual review of Member and Officer Protocol	To receive the annual review and consider any recommendations