
Working Group Updates

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The Standards Committee has set up 3 working groups to help support the work of the Committee: Priority Group 1, Priority Group 2 and Priority Group 3
- 1.2. Since the Standards Committee's last meeting on 24 January 2024 Priority Groups 1 & 2 have met and their reports to the Committee are attached as appendices.
- 1.3. Priority Group 1 looked at the Code of Conduct and their findings and recommendations are attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4. Priority Group 2 looked at the cities, town and parish council Code of Conducts and their findings and recommendations are attached as **Appendix 2**.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.
 1. To consider the findings and recommendations of Priority Group 1 set in Appendix 1 and to take any appropriate action.
 2. To consider the findings and recommendations of Priority Group 2 set in Appendix 2 and to take any appropriate action.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Standards Committee has set up 3 working groups, as follows:

Priority Group 1

Cllr John Bailey (Chair),

Cllr Brian Smedley

Cllr Frances Nicholson,

David Stripp

Paul Hooper

Priority Group 2

Cllr Frances Nicholson (Chair)

Robin Horton

Alan Hemsley

Priority Group 3

Cllr Martin Dimery (Chair)

Cllr Hugh Davies

Alan Hemsley

3.2. The working groups have the following actions allocated to them:

Priority Group 1

- Review the Monitoring Officer's arrangements for the investigation of allegations of breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct by Members and co-opted Members and to make recommendations for appropriate changes to the Monitoring Officer.
- Media Plan/Protocol review & costings

Priority Group 2

- Review committee/sub-committee membership.
- Qualitative response to Survey Q5.
- To discuss and feedback the Groups' thoughts on improving response levels to survey and uptake of Code of Conduct.

4. Options Considered and any consultation undertaken

4.1. It is for the Committee to consider the findings of the priority groups and to take what action they consider appropriate after advice from the Monitoring Officer.

5. Legal, Equalities, Financial and Other Implications

5.1. The Council has a legal obligation to maintain high standards of conduct of its Members. The effective administration of the code of conduct for members will also reduce the risk of reputational harm to the Council and promote good governance within the Council.

5.2. Following local government reorganisation in Somerset the Council now also administers the Code of Conduct complaints process for all City, Town and Parish Councils within their area.

5.3. Because the investigation and determination of complaints about breaches of the code of conduct is quasi-judicial in nature it is important for that processes adopted should be fair and transparent.

6. Background papers

6.1. Previous Standard Committee agendas and minutes.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix 1 - Report to the Standards Committee from Priority Group 1

Appendix 2 – Report to the Standards Committee from Priority Group 2

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