



North Tyneside Council

Standards Committee

Friday, 6 November 2020

To be held on Thursday, 12 November 2020 commencing at 2:00 pm.

The meeting will be held virtually and live streamed via the Council's YouTube channel.

Agenda Item	Page
<p>1. Apologies for Absence</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>2. Appointment of Substitute Members</p> <p>To be notified of the appointment of any Substitute Members.</p>	
<p>3. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations</p> <p>You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.</p> <p>You are also invited to disclose any dispensations in relation to any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.</p> <p>Please complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.</p>	
<p>4. Minutes</p> <p>To confirm the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 14 November 2019.</p> <p>To note the following minutes of the Standards Sub-committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19 December 2019• 5 March 2020	5 - 12

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**Agenda
Item****Page****5. Standards Annual Report****13 - 26**

To consider the Standards Annual Report for 2019-20.

Circulation overleaf ...

Members of the Standards Committee

Councillor Martin Rankin (Chair)
Councillor Brian Burdis
Councillor Janet Hunter
Councillor Karen Lee (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Bruce Pickard

Councillor Sean Brockbank
Councillor Sandra Graham
Councillor Carl Johnson
Councillor Frank Lott

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Standards Committee

14 November 2019

Present: Councillor M Rankin (Chair)
Councillors B Burdis, S Graham, Janet Hunter, K Lee, F Lott, B Pickard

Also in Attendance: Dr S Green, Independent Person

SC06/11/19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S Brockbank, S Graham and C Johnson.

SC07/11/19 Appointment of Substitute Members

Councillor J O'Shea for Cllr S Graham

SC08/11/19 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

SC09/11/19 Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous Standards Committee meeting held on 11 July 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to the agreed correction to the attendee list.

SC10/11/19 Member Development – Monitoring and Recording Mandatory Training

The Committee considered the report which advised the committee on the completion of elected member mandatory training. It was noted that around two thirds of members had completed general mandatory training and most members had completed the training required to sit on regulatory committees where this applies to them.

It was noted that a structured programme of member training for Audit Committee members is in development following a review of the committee's arrangements.

Members highlighted that some members may not be confident about accessing the e-learning modules and that it might be helpful to offer one-to-one support to complete e-learning modules as appropriate.

It was suggested that group leaders should be approached to raise the matter with individual members who have not completed the necessary training, with a view to ensuring all members are trained before March 2020. A further report should be submitted to the Committee after this date.

It was **agreed** that:

- Members be offered one-to-one support in relation to e-learning modules as required;
- Group leaders to be provided with information on individual members with mandatory general or committee training outstanding, and to be asked to encourage members to complete this training by the end of February 2020.
- That a further report be submitted to the Committee after this date.

SC11/11/19 Standards Committee Action Plan/Work Programme 2019-20

The Committee considered the action plan/work programme for the year up to 31 March 2020.

There was some discussion about the action plan item on invited guests. Members were asked for their view on whether to continue with this programme as part of the action plan. It was suggested that it would be interesting to hear from Chairs of the regulatory committees, particularly the Planning Committee, following recent changes, including changes to training for members of the Planning Committee.

It was noted that there are plans to arrange a regional meeting and this is being arranged with other monitoring officers across the region.

It was noted that a Code of Conduct training session had been held in October and this had been modified to include an element on Social Media. Feedback from members who had attended the training had been positive and it was suggested that the information about social media had been a useful addition and should be continued.

It was noted that training for Independent Persons was likely to be arranged on a one-to one basis.

It was **agreed** that:

The Chair of Planning Committee, Cllr Lott, be invited to provide information to the next meeting of the Committee on ethical governance and ethical standards in relation to the Planning Committee.

Signed by: -----

Date: -----

Cllr M Rankin, Chair of the Standards Committee

Standards Sub-Committee

19 December 2019

Present: Councillor M Rankin (Chair)
Councillor F Lott

SSC01/12/19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S Brockbank

SSC02/12/19 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

SSC03/12/19 Dispensations – Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Standards Sub-Committee received a report on applications received from a number of Members of the Council, seeking dispensation in accordance with Section 33(2)(e) of the Localism Act 2011. The dispensations sought would enable the Members to speak and vote on any item of business at any Authority meeting (including specifically the Authority's budget setting meetings) in which they had a registerable interest by virtue of their appointment by the Authority to outside bodies.

Copies of the application letters from Members seeking dispensation were submitted with the report and were considered by the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that two additional applications had been received since the papers were circulated and would be considered at this meeting. These applications were from Cllr S Day and Cllr J Kirwin.

Resolved:

- i. That the dispensations requested by members, as set out in the table below, be granted. Each dispensation is granted for either a period of 4 years, or, the date when the Member ceases to be the Authority's representative on the outside body, whichever is earlier;
- ii. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Law and Governance to agree any further written requests from Members for a dispensation that relates to a registerable interest by virtue of their appointment by the Authority to an outside body during 2019-20.

Outside Body Dispensations

Dispensations were agreed by the Standards Sub-committee on 19 December 2019 in relation to the outside body appointments set out below:

Item	Councillor	Outside Body	Executive/ Non Executive
1	Councillor Linda Bell	Wallsend Charitable (Victor Mann) Trust	Non Exec
		Tyne and Wear Trading Standards Joint Committee (Substitute)	Exec
2	Councillor Trish Brady	Wallsend Charitable (Victor Mann) Trust	Non Exec
		Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (Substitute)	Non Exec
		Tyne Port Health Authority (Substitute)	Exec
3	Councillor Naomi Craven	Association of North East Councils Resources Task and Finish Group	Non Exec
4	Councillor Cath Davis	Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Strategic Board (Rotating member for 2019-20)	Exec
5	Councillor Sarah Day	British Destinations	Non Exec
6	Councillor Peter Earley	North of Tyne Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Exec
		Kettlewell Education Foundation	Non Exec
7	Councillor Ray Glendon	North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited	Exec
		North Tyneside Trading (Development) Limited	Exec
8	Councillor Margaret Hall	North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors	Exec

9	Councillor Janet Hunter	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	Exec
10	Councillor Carl Johnson	Local Government Association Assembly	Non Exec
11	Councillor Joe Kirwin	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (Substitute)	Non Exec
		Tyne Port Health Authority (Substitute)	Exec
12	Councillor Karen Lee	Stations Development Limited	Exec
13	Councillor Janice Mole	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	Non Exec
		Joint Street Lighting PFI Project Committee (Substitute)	Exec
		Northumbria Police and Crime Panel	Exec
14	Councillor Thomas Mulvenna	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	Non Exec
		Northumbria Police and Crime Panel	Exec
15	Councillor Erin Parker Leonard	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (Substitute)	Non Exec
16	Councillor Steven Phillips	Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Strategic Board (Substitute)	Exec
17	Councillor Bruce Pickard	North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited	Exec
		North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited	Exec

Standards Sub-Committee

		Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	Exec
18	Councillor Paul Richardson	Joint Street Lighting PFI Project Committee (Substitute)	Exec
19	Councillor Willie Samuel	PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Joint Committee) Adjudication Joint Committee (Substitute)	Exec
		Cullercoats Education Trust	Non Exec

Standards Sub-Committee

5 March 2020

Present: Councillor M Rankin (Chair)
Councillors K Lee and S Brockbank

Also Present: Mr G Clark, Independent Person

SSC04/03/20 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

SSC05/03/20 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

SSC06/03/20 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

SSC07/03/20 Exclusion Resolution

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test as defined in Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

SSC08/03/20 Code of Conduct for Members – Complaint NT11 2018-19

The Standards Sub-Committee received a report which presented the Investigating Officer's completed investigation into Complaint NT11 2018-19.

The Authority's Local Arrangements for the consideration of complaints made against Members under the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members at Appendix 1 to the report, required that a completed investigation report be received by the Standards Committee/Sub-Committee to determine the action to be taken with respect to the Complaint.

The final report of the Investigating Officer into Complaint NT011 2018-19 was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. The Investigating Officer had found in his report that no breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members had occurred in relation to this complaint. In considering the report, the Standards Sub-Committee was required to consult with the Authority's Independent Persons, one of which was in attendance at the meeting. The Sub-committee had also received written comments from another of the Independent Persons.

The Sub-Committee examined the Investigating Officer's report and the conclusion. There was some discussion about the use of social media and the extent to which members are acting in their capacity as a Councillor in any use of social media. It was noted that the investigating officer had provided a detailed analysis of the current law in this area. Members accepted the findings of the Investigating Officer.

Resolved that (1) the findings of the Investigating Officer that no breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members had occurred in relation to Complaint NT11.2018-19 be accepted; and

(2) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to write to the Subject Member and to the Complainant to notify them both that the Sub-Committee was satisfied no further action was required, and provide both with a copy of the Investigating Officer's final report.

North Tyneside Council Report to Standards Committee Date: 12 November 2020

ITEM 5

Title: Standards
Committee Draft Annual
Report 2019-20

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Report Authors: Bryn Roberts, Head of Law and Governance (Tel: 643 5339)
& Monitoring Officer

Stephen Ballantyne, Legal Manager – (Tel: 643 5329)
Governance and Employment

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose

To introduce the Standards Committee Draft Annual Report for 2019-20 for consideration by the Committee. It should be noted that the Annual Report would usually be submitted to the Annual Council meeting for its information, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic this could not happen.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- (1) consider and suggest any additions and amendments to the Draft Annual Report 2018-19 attached at Appendix 1 as appropriate; and
- (2) authorise the Head of Law and Governance in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee to finalise the report.

3. Background

At the end of the municipal year the Standards Committee is required to approve the contents of a draft annual report summarising the work of the Committee over the previous year for submission to the Annual Council meeting.

The Committee is responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Authority, helping to secure adherence to the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Code within North Tyneside, promoting and reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy for Members and conducting hearings following investigation and determining complaints made against Councillors in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct (including following requests for review).

The Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 1. The report sets out the work undertaken by the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees over the municipal year. The report highlights the ways in which the

Standards Committee has influenced and shaped policy and the promotion and maintenance of ethical standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives.

The Committee will consider its work programme for the new municipal year in due course subject to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2019/20.

5. Contact officers:

Stephen Ballantyne, Legal Manager: Governance and Employment	(0191) 643 5359
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Joanne Holmes, Democratic Services Officer	(0191) 643 5315
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6. Background information:

None.

Standards Committee



Annual Report 2019/20



Chair's Foreword

As Chair of the Standards Committee, I am pleased to present the Committee's Annual Report, which outlines the work undertaken by the Committee in 2019/20.

The Standards Committee remains committed to working with and supporting Members of the Council to ensure that they respect the Code of Conduct and uphold the standards expected of those in public life.

To achieve this, the Committee has worked closely with the Council's Monitoring Officer to ensure that the principles of good governance and ethical standards remain central to the business of the Authority and instil public confidence in those elected to public office.

I would like to thank all of the Committee Members, the Independent Persons and Officers who I have worked with over this last year in relation to my role of Chair of the Standards Committee.

Councillor M Rankin
Chair of the Standards Committee

1. Standards Committee

1. Introduction

At the end of each municipal year the Standards Committee submits for the consideration of Council an annual report summarising the work the Committee has carried out during the previous year. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown the report's submission to the final Standard Committee meeting of the 2019/20 municipal year did not happen.

This report comprises the Annual Review covering the period April 2019 to March 2020 together with background information regarding the standards regime established within North Tyneside Council. All references to 2019/20 in the report refer to this time period.

2. Background Information

The Code of Conduct for Elected Members and Co-opted Members ('the Code' or 'The Code of Conduct')

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to have a Code of Conduct. In 2012 North Tyneside Council ("the Authority") adopted a code which sets out the conduct that is expected of elected and co-opted members of the Authority when they are acting in that capacity. The Code was developed regionally between Cumbria, Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland councils.

The Code applies whenever a member (a) conducts the business of the Authority (including the business of their office as an elected member or co-opted member) or (b) acts, claims to act or gives the impression they are acting as a representative of the Authority.

'Co-opted member' means any person who is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Authority with a right to vote but who is not one of its elected members.

The Code is intended to be consistent with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life, and should be read in the light of those principles, namely that Authority Members will act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer holds a statutory role and is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law and maladministration to the full Council and/or to the Cabinet (as set out in s.5(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

The Monitoring Officer and their team administer the local arrangements for addressing complaints made under the Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer's role includes the assessment and review of every complaint received under the Code of Conduct. Following consultation with the Authority's

Independent Persons and consideration of the initial comments of the subject member the Monitoring Officer decides whether the complaint will be investigated. The decision will be based on whether the allegation, if proved, would constitute a failure to observe the Code of Conduct and the application of the Authority's adopted assessment criteria.

The Monitoring Officer may also consider that a complaint can be reasonably resolved informally and will discuss this option with the complainant and subject member where appropriate.

Independent Persons

The Authority has appointed three Independent Person(s) who are invited to attend all meetings of the Standards Committee. The appointment of Independent Persons is determined by a meeting of Full Council.

The Independent Person(s) must be consulted by the Authority before it makes a decision on a matter that has been referred to it for investigation. They can also be consulted by the Authority in respect of a code of conduct complaint at any other stage and can also be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the Authority against whom a complaint has been made.

The Independent Persons do not form part of a quorum but may be invited to attend where considered appropriate by the Sub-Committee.

The Standards Committee

The Standards Committee is responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Authority, helping to secure adherence to the Code, monitoring the operation of the Code, promoting and reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy for Members, and conducting hearings following investigation and determining complaints made under the Code.

The Standards Committee's terms of reference are set out in Part 3, Paragraph 3.5(E) of North Tyneside Council's Constitution (the Constitution).

The Committee and its Sub-Committee conduct proceedings in accordance with:

- Article 9 of the Constitution; and
- the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members

The Standards Sub-Committee

The Standards Sub-Committee receives and considers reports from Investigating Officers in relation to allegations of breaches of the Code.

Where a Final Report from an Investigating Officer recommends a finding that there is no breach of the Code, the Sub-Committee determines whether to accept the report; refer the report back to the Investigating Officer if it is considered incomplete; or refer the report to a hearing in accordance with the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members.

Where a Final Report from an Investigating Officer recommends a finding that there has been a breach of the Code the Sub-Committee undertakes a hearing in accordance with the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code.

The Standards Sub-Committee is responsible for granting dispensations to the Elected Mayor, Members and Co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Code.

The Sub-Committee also has responsibility for undertaking such further functions of the Standards Committee as may be delegated to the Sub-Committee in respect of the handling of complaints against the elected Mayor, elected Members or Co-opted Members.

3. Training for Standards Committee Members

Initial and refresher training for Members serving on the Standards Committee of the Authority is important to ensure the probity and credibility of the Authority's decision making processes. Members are required to undertake basic training through the Authority's member induction programme, on election or re-election, before they can serve on the Standards Committee. This training includes the duties and responsibilities of the Standards Committee.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, as determined in each case by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Mayor and Group Leaders, any Member who has not undertaken the training will not continue to serve on the Committee.

Training is also provided for the Independent Persons appointed by the Authority in order to ensure they are able to carry out their role.

4. Standards Committee Membership 2019/20

In 2019/20 the Standards Committee comprised the following Members: Councillors Sean Brockbank; Brian Burdis; Sandra Graham, Janet Hunter; Carl Johnson; Karen Lee (Deputy Chair); Frank Lott; Bruce Pickard; and Martin Rankin (Chair).

5. The Authority's Independent Persons

The Authority has three Independent Persons who were appointed in July 2019 for a period of four years. The Independent Persons are Mr George Clark, Ms Stella Gardner and Dr Stuart Green.

6. Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings in 2019/20

At the start of each year the Standards Committee agree its Work Programme/Action Plan for the year, which is then monitored at meetings throughout the year.

The Work Programme/Action Plan for 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 1 to this report and is commented upon further in paragraph 10 below.

The Standards Committee met on 2 occasions in 2019/20. The following meetings took place:

- 11 July 2019
- 14 November 2019

A further meeting was scheduled to take place on the 9 April 2020 but this meeting was unable to go ahead due to Coronavirus restrictions.

The Sub-Committee met on the 19 December 2019 to consider applications for dispensations under the Code of Conduct.

The Sub-committee also met on 5 March 2020 to consider an investigation report into a complaint where no breach of the code was found.

7. Complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members

During 2019/20, 17 complaints of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct were received.

Table 1 below details how each complaint was dealt with on assessment and provides details of the previous years to 2012/2013.

Table1

Local Assessment Decisions	No action	Informal resolution	Referred for Investigation	Total
2019/2020	13	4	0	17
2018/2019	10	3	2	15
2017/2018	6	2	1	9
2016/2017	4	1	0	5
2015/2016	15	0	0	15
2014/2015	13	1	10	24
2013/2014	0	0	1	1
2012/2013	11	5	1	17

8. Reviews of Initial Assessment Decisions

If a complainant is dissatisfied with an initial assessment decision they may seek a review. Reviews are undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Persons and the Chair of the Standards Committee.

In 2019/20 there were 0 requests for a review of the initial assessment decision.

In 2018/19 there were 4 requests for a review of the initial assessment decision. Following the review, the original decision was upheld in each case.

In 2017/18 there were no requests for the review of the initial assessment decision.

In 2016/17 there was 1 request made for the review of the initial assessment decision. Following the review, the original decision was upheld.

In 2015/16, 1 request was made for a review of the initial assessment. Following the review, the original decision was upheld.

In 2014/15, 6 requests were made for a review of the initial assessment. Following the reviews, the original decisions were upheld.

In 2012/13 and 2013/14 there were no requests for the review of the initial assessment decision.

9. Decisions on complaints following investigation

During 2019/20 there were no complaints referred for investigation.

The Sub-committee considered one investigation report that related to a complaint referred for investigation in 2018/19. In that case the committee accepted the finding of the Investigation Officer that no breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members had occurred.

10. Review of Standards Committee Work Programme and Action Plan for 2019/20

The Standards Committee's Work Programme/Action Plan for 2019/20 is attached at Annex 1. Matters of particular note are summarised below.

The Standards Committee met on 2 occasions during the year. At each meeting the Committee monitored its Action Plan. The matters undertaken include:

A. Review of Code of Conduct and Local Arrangements

The Standards Committee has been advised that a review of the constitution is underway and this will include reviewing the code of conduct for Members. The review will incorporate consideration of the recommendations arising from the review of the Committee for Standards in Public Life's report on Government Ethical Standards. It will identify where the Authority is already meeting best practice, and highlight any areas where arrangements could be improved. Any suggested changes will be reported to the Standards Committee before being reported to the Constitution Task Group and Full Council for agreement. Unfortunately this has not progressed because of the coronavirus restrictions but remains a live matter to be completed.

It was also noted that the Monitoring Officer is considering the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with Complaints under the Code of Conduct, with a view to identifying ways to filter out frivolous complaints earlier in the process to reduce the burden on officer time. This could involve strengthening the powers of the Monitoring Officer as part of the initial assessment process. Any changes would be developed in consultation with the Standards Committee.

A Pocket Guide to the Code of Conduct for Members' and the requirements in relation to interests was developed and approved by the Standards Committee for circulation to all Members' to assist in how the Code applied to them.

B. Dialogue with Members and Officers

The Standards Committee has responsibility for the Authority's statutory duty for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected Members and co-opted Members of the Council. During 2019/20 invited guests included the Chair of Planning Committee, Councillor F Lott , who was due to give his perspective on ethical governance and standards in relation to regulatory committees following recent changes to training for members of the Planning Committee at the April meeting. Cllr Lott will be invited to give his perspective at a future meeting of the Committee.

C. Member Development – Monitoring and Recording Mandatory Training

The Committee has received information on the monitoring and recording of mandatory training. It was noted that around two thirds of members had completed general mandatory training, and most members had completed the training required to sit on regulatory committees where this applies to them. It was noted that a structured programme of member training for Audit Committee members is in development following a review of the committee's arrangements.

Members highlighted some improvements that could be implemented, including the provision of one-to-one support to members, as required, to access e-learning modules. It was also agreed that group leaders should be provided with information on members with outstanding mandatory training requirements, and be asked to encourage all members to complete all training by the end of February 2020.

It was noted that a Code of Conduct training session had been held for members in October 2019. This had been modified to include an element on social media, given that an increasing number of complaints received are related to members use of social media. Feedback from members had been positive, and there is an intention to continue to include information on social media in future training sessions.

D. Regional Training Event

A regional training event/seminar was arranged by North Tyneside Council and held at Quadrant on 17 February 2020. The theme of the session was 'Developments in Governance'. The seminar was aimed at Chairs/Deputy Chairs of Standards Committees, Independent Persons, Monitoring Officers and their Deputies, and Governance Solicitors.

The seminar was led by Olwen Brown of Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP, who also presented an update on developments in Governance and Standards issues. The event was well attended and received positive feedback.

11. Conclusion

The Committee continues to be busy and, as this report demonstrates, has dealt with a variety of matters in the past year. The Committee's aim is to continue to develop and maintain the Authority's ethical governance framework for the benefit of the Authority and ultimately local people. The Committee is looking forward to the next year.

The Standards Committee Work/Action Plan up to 31 March 2020

This Action Plan was monitored by the Committee at each meeting.

The Standards Committee is responsible for the Authority's statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members. The Committee has worked to discharge this duty by undertaking the following actions:

Action	Why	By When	Progress
1. Monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and undertake a review of the Committee for Standards in Public Life's report on Local Government Ethical Standards to identify where the Authority is already meeting best practice and where there are areas where the Authority's arrangements could be improved.	To ensure that it is operating effectively	Ongoing	The review of the Members' Code of Conduct is being undertaken as a part of the larger review of the Authority's Constitution. Unfortunately this has not progressed because of the coronavirus restrictions but remains a live matter to be completed.
2. To review the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with Complaints under the Code of Conduct.	To ensure that the Authority's Local Arrangements meet the requirements and expectations of the Members and the relevant legislation.	Ongoing	As above

<p>3. To continue to develop an ongoing programme of meetings with invited guests, including the Elected Mayor, the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Group Leaders, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council and the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee and other Regulatory Committees.</p>	<p>To develop a dialogue between the Committee, and members and appropriate Officers relating to ethical governance and ethical standards.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Chair of the Planning Committee was due to attend the meeting of the Committee in April but the meeting was unable to go ahead due to Coronavirus restrictions. This will be re-arranged for a future meeting.</p>
<p>4. Regional meetings of the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Standards Committees and Independent Persons be arranged in consultation with other regional authorities</p>	<p>To provide an opportunity to share knowledge and best practice.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>A regional training event/seminar was arranged by North Tyneside Council and held at Quadrant on 17 February 2020. The theme of the session was 'Developments in Governance'. The event was well attended by representatives of authorities across the north east and North Yorkshire.</p>

5. To review training available to all Council Members on ethical governance, ethical standards issues including arrangements with respect to the Code of Conduct; granting of dispensations, the use of Social Media and declaring interests	To ensure all members receive information on ethical governance, ethical standards to minimise risk of unwitting breaches of the Code of Conduct.	Ongoing	Code of Conduct training was held for members in October 2019. This included an additional element on social media. Following positive feedback there is an intention to continue to include information on social media in future training sessions.
6. To seek the further promotion with all Members of the Authority's e-learning training on the use social media.	To assist the Authority to fulfil its statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.	Ongoing	As above
7. Continue production of Annual Standards Committee Report	Presentation of Annual Report of the work of the Committee during the previous 12 months.	By end of each municipal year.	Completed.
8. To provide training to the Independent Persons on their role, this to include invitations to relevant training for Members.	To ensure that the Authority's Independent Persons understand their role in relation to ethical governance and the Code of Conduct for Members as well as the disciplinary procedures for Statutory Officers.	Ongoing	Ongoing

9. To update where necessary and recirculate the pocket guide to the Code of Conduct and the requirements in relation to interests to all Members.	To assist Members in how the Code of Conduct applies to them.	December 2019	Completed.
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