

North Tyneside Council

Report to Standards Committee

Date: 30 November 2023

Title: Action Plan/Work Programme 2023-24

Report from Service Area: Legal Services

Responsible Officer: Stephen Ballantyne, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer Tel: (0191) 643 5329

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

To provide a report on the Action Plan/Work Programme of the Standards Committee for 2023/24.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

The Committee is requested to consider and note this report.

1.3 Information:

The Standards Committee's - Action Plan/Work Programme up to 31 March 2024

1.3.1 This Action Plan is monitored by the Committee at each meeting and the progress of the identified actions will be reported in the Committee's Annual Report to full Council at the end of the municipal year.

1.3.2 The Standards Committee is responsible for the Authority's statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Members and Co-opted Members.

- 1.3.3 On 6 July 2023 the Action Plan/Work Programme was agreed by the Committee and set out below are the tasks and matters that the Committee agreed that it would consider during the municipal year and report to full Council at the end of the municipal year.
- 1.3.4 The Action Plan/Work Programme is monitored by the Committee at each meeting and the progress of the identified actions will be reported in the Committee's Annual Report in May 2024.

Action	Why	By When	Progress/Action
To support the establishment of regular meetings (at least twice a year) of the 3 Independent Persons together with the Monitoring Officer Meetings to include the Chair and Deputy Chair where appropriate.	To support the development and maintenance of working relationships between the independent persons and provide a forum to discuss case law and other guidance, to discuss any concerns and ensure best practice is being followed.	By the end of the municipal year.	The Monitoring Officer is to meet with the Independent Persons on 11 December 2023.

<p>To extend a meeting invitation to guests and to seek topics of conversation from those guests in relation to ethical governance and standards. This could include 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>Representative from the Authority's Communications Team are to attend this meeting of the Committee.</p>
<p>To ensure training and development is provided for the Committee on relevant ethical standards issues, including training on local assessment, the Code of Conduct and other relevant matters/cases/legislation. To include informal methods such as briefing notes and informal meetings.</p>	<p>To develop and maintain high standards of knowledge and skill.</p>	<p>By the end of the municipal year.</p>	<p>Newly elected Members were trained on the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members following the May 2023 elections. Refresher training on the Code was also provided to existed Members as required.</p>

To support and promote an external training session for all elected members on the use of social media and the risks.	To increase awareness of the risks and to promote high standards of conduct.	By the end of the municipal year.	A "Social Media Workshop for Members" took place on 29 November 2023. This training was provided by a specialist trainer.
To keep under 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.	By the end of the municipal year.	Ongoing.
Continue production of Annual Standards Committee Report.	Presentation of Annual Report of the work of the Committee during the previous 12 months.	By the end of the municipal year.	Ongoing.

1.4 Appendices:

None.

1.5 Contact Officers:

Stephen Ballantyne, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer (0191) 643 5329

Joanne Holmes, Democratic Services (0191) 643 5315

1.6 Background Information:

Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members;

The Localism Act 2011

The report to the Standards Committee dated 6 July 2023