

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Standards Committee

Date: 7 July 2022

### ITEM

Title: Action Plan/Work Programme 2022/23

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Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Report Author: John Barton, Principal Lawyer (Tel: 643 643 5354)

Wards affected: All

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#### 1.1 Purpose:

To provide a report on the Action Plan/Work Programme of the Standards Committee for 2022/23.

#### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

The schedule of meetings for 2022/23 be noted and the work programme for the Standards Committee set out below be adopted.

#### 1.3 Information

##### 1.3.1 The Standards Committee's - Action Plan/Work Programme up to 31 March 2023

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

##### 1.3.2 The terms of reference of the Standards Committee are set out in Part 3.5 of the Authority's Constitution and are: -

1. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives.
2. To ensure the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
3. To advise the Authority on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
5. To advise, train or arrange to train the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

6. To grant dispensations to the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
7. To monitor complaints received by the Authority in respect of Member conduct.
8. To review the Whistle-blowing policy for Members.
9. To conduct hearings following investigation and determine complaints made against Councillors (including following requests for review).
10. Where a Member is found to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct to take such action as may be necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, in accordance with the powers available to the Committee.
11. To amend the assessment criteria for complaints against Members (included in the Authority's adopted arrangements) as it considers appropriate from time to time.
12. To undertake such further functions as may be the responsibility of the Committee under the Authority's adopted arrangements in relation to the handling of complaints against Members.
13. To approve the contents of an annual report summarising the work of the Committee over the previous year for submission to the Annual Council meeting.

1.3.3 The draft Action Plan/Work Programme set out below details proposed tasks and matters to be considered by the Standards Committee in this municipal year, including items carried forward from 2021/22. Members are requested to consider the proposed items and determine the action plan/work programme for 2022/23.

1.3.4 The Action Plan/Work Programme will be 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 2023.

Action	Why	By When
To consider the recruitment process and appointment of Independent Persons as the term of office for the current Independent Persons comes to an end, and to make recommendations to Council.	To ensure that at least one (and up to three) Independent Persons are in place, in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.	31 July 2022
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,	To develop a dialogue between the Committee, and members and appropriate Officers relating to ethical governance and ethical standards.	Ongoing

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.		
To invite Chairs of Standards Committees from other Authorities in the region to attend Committee meetings and to seek opportunities to attend Standards Committee meetings in neighbouring authorities.	To provide an opportunity to understand ethical governance and standards issues in other Authorities.	Ongoing
To provide training for the Committee on relevant ethical standards issues.	Training on local assessment, the Code of Conduct and other relevant matters/legislation.	Ongoing.
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
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.

### 1.3.2 The schedule of Meetings 2021/22

- 7 July 2022
- 10 November 2022
- 6 April 2023

#### **1.4 Appendices:**

None.

#### **1.5 Contact officers:**

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Joanne Holmes, Democratic Services (0191) 643 5315

#### **1.6 Background information:**

- Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members.
- The Localism Act 2011.
- Standards Committee Annual Report 2021/22.