

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
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CABINET

21 NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER AND CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

A.2 PROPOSED NEW STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS

(Report prepared by Lisa Hastings and Martyn Knappett)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the opportunity for the Cabinet to endorse the proposed new Standards Framework for the Council and refer to Council with a recommendation to adopt the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A comprehensive revision of the Council's arrangements for promoting high standards of conduct by Members has been carried out and a new Standards Framework has been developed.

The five elements of the Framework are:

- The Members' Code of Conduct.
- The Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers for the Standards Committee and the Town and Parish Councils Sub-Committee.
- The Monitoring Officer Protocol.
- The Independent Person's Protocol.
- The Complaints Procedure.

These documents collectively strengthen the Council's arrangements for fulfilling its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to building public confidence by demonstrating a commitment to maintaining positive behaviours in relation to all seven principles of public life.

The overall approach of the new arrangements is to seek

- A focus on clarity of information and training for Members to increase awareness and support good standards of behaviour,
- Proportionality – responses to complaints which are proportionate to their seriousness,
- Timeliness – with clear timescales for the various stages of complaints to be progressed.
- Checks, balances, reporting requirements and delegation to the Monitoring Officer of key elements of the process to maximise independence from the political process.

- Early and informal intervention to resolve complaints wherever possible (including an expectation that Group Leaders will play a key role).

The proposals are set out in full detail in the Report to full Council on 26 November 2013 and which is attached (together with the Appendices setting out each of the elements of the Framework) as Appendix 1.

LEGAL

Section 27(8) Localism Act 2011, that functions applicable to the Standards Framework are not to be the responsibility of an executive of the Council under executive arrangements however, as the Report to Council requires changes to the Constitution, these require Cabinet's approval.

In accordance with the requirement of the Constitution, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Corporate Governance has confirmed that he supports the proposed changes to the Constitution and recommends the Cabinet endorses the recommendations to Full Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet endorses the proposed new Standards Framework and formally supports the recommendations to Full Council set out in the report attached as Appendix A.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Report to Full Council