

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

PRESENT:- Councillor David Wood (Chair), Councillor Gary Sumner, Councillor Vera Tomlinson, Councillor Steve Weisinger, Councillor Joe Tray, Mr Trevor Davies, Mr David Dawson, Mick Compton, Mr Richard Hailstone and Mr Keith Strickland.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fay Howard and Councillor Teresa Page.

### 17. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

### 18. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 19. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

### 20. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the item listed below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph Nos.</u>	<u>Minute No.</u>
8	1 and 2	23

### 21. Question and Answer Session - Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, and John Gilbert, the Chief Executive, were in attendance to report to the Committee on matters relating to the Council's ethical governance framework and issues of probity, particularly the Authority's approach to ethical governance and its key priorities in ensuring that high ethical standards continue to be promoted and maintained within the Council.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Renard addressed the meeting on the efficacy of the Council's ethical framework and its embedding within the organisation as an easily recognised platform for member behaviours when

representing the Authority. It was his view that the framework continued to work well and, referring to issues raised at his last meeting with the Standards Committee, he commented on the enhanced opportunities for staff to provide feedback to members and senior management on issues of concern and interest, these including regular officer forums and a variety of staff engagement events. Councillor Renard remarked that these events had also provided an opportunity to provide information to staff, on a “face to face” basis, relating to the Council Vision and its priorities and other corporate issues. He made specific reference to the use of such forums and staff events to facilitate the ongoing consultation regarding car parking provision and mileage allowances and also the opportunity for engagement with the trade unions on corporate issues via the regular Council Joint Consultative Committee meetings.

Councillor Renard assured the meeting that he and his Cabinet colleagues were supportive of officers and their work and referred to the relationships and interactions between members and officers, which he felt remained generally positive, with a high degree of respect and professionalism and co-operation evident on both sides.

The Chief Executive also remarked on the enhanced opportunities for staff to provide feedback to members and senior management, specifically referring to engagement with heads of service and section managers to provide updates and facilitate information exchange on any number of issues via the newly-instated regular meetings of the Extended Management Team (EMT) and Wider Management Team (WMT). He advised that it was a purpose of these meetings to establish an environment that would allow officers to contribute to the Council's change agenda and help identify areas where service improvements might be made. He referred to the transformation work being undertaken and the variety of transformation programmes that had been established, each sponsored by a Director, and advised that he, himself, was sponsoring a leadership and management training module aimed at expanding managers' knowledge of corporate culture and ethics, both from a leadership management perspective and also the opportunities for individual staff members to be involved in the process.

Following their opening remarks, the Leader and Chief Executive responded to members' questions and observations on the following issues:

- The pending review of the composition of the Corporate Management Team, following the recent appointment of the Corporate Director Transformation and Resources, and the continued membership on the team of the Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer.
- The future role of the Localities Team, following the Council's recent review of Community Governance arrangements, and the facilitating of future engagement between the Council and Parish Councils.
- The potential to enhance the role of members in facilitating and maintaining links between the Council, Parish Councils and the wider community.
- Member applications for dispensation under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- The potential impact of the establishment of a greater number of Parish Councils on the workload of the Standards Committee.
- The staffing and budgetary implications of the transfer of services from the Council to Parish Councils.

Resolved – That Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, and the Chief Executive be thanked for attending the meeting and for their full and open responses to members questions on matters relating to the Council's ethical governance framework and issues of probity.

## **22. Ethical Framework Update**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services providing an update on matters relating to the Ethical Framework, including:

- Dispensations.
- Code of Conduct Complaints.
- Codes and Protocols.
- The Casey Review in relation to the role of the Monitoring Officer
- Member Training – Induction Training and General Training issues.

Resolved – (1) That the Ethical Framework update be noted.

(2) That the outcome of the consultation on the Council's Codes and Protocols be noted and that these be approved, without amendment, for inclusion in the Council's Constitution for 2017/18.

## **23. Ethical Compliance Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the outcome of various ethical framework compliance matters, including the details and outcomes of Whistleblowing cases and Code of Conduct Complaints received since the last Committee meeting.

Resolved – That the Ethical Framework Compliance report be noted.