

## Swindon Borough Council

# Standards Committee

**Monday, 12 October 2015**

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

**At 5.00 p.m.**

### **Councillors**

Michael Bray  
Richard Hurley  
Maureen Penny  
Eric Shaw  
Vera Tomlinson  
Mark Edwards (Deputy)  
Kevin Parry (Deputy)  
(Conservative)

Fay Howard  
Teresa Page  
Carol Shelley  
(Labour)

David Wood (Chair)  
(Liberal Democrat)

### **Co-opted Representatives**

Mr Trevor Davies  
Mr David Dawson  
(Lay Members)

Mike Compton  
Richard Hailstone  
(Parish Representatives)

### **Independent Persons for Information:**

Paul Morris  
Keith Strickland

**Committee Officer:** Steve Jones (Telephone 01793 463602)  
email: [stevejones@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:stevejones@swindon.gov.uk)

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are requested at the start of the meeting to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and are reminded that any such interest should also be declared at the start of an item or during any discussion of the matter concerned.

**3. Minutes** (Pages 5 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

**4. Public Question Time**

*(See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Clerk whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.)*

**5. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public**

*Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Standards Committee is, therefore, recommended to resolve "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 items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".*

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph No.</u>
<b>8</b>	<b>1 and 2</b>

**6. Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership**  
DLDS (Pages 7 - 10)

**7. Ethical Framework Update** DLDS (Pages 11 - 26)

**8. Ethical Compliance Report** DLDS (Pages 27 - 30)

2 November 2015 (being date of agenda despatch)

**Key:**

DLDS - Director of Law and Democratic Services

**Public Question Time** - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website.

(<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

**Access Arrangements** - *The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special*

*requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Officer, whose name appears at the top of this agenda, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.*

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

### **Standards Committee - Terms of Reference**

The Standards Committee has the following roles and functions in accordance with Article 9 of the Council's Constitution:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members including church and parent governor representatives;
- (b) assisting the councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) recommending training on any aspect of conduct and behaviour for Councillors, and officers, where it considers it would be of benefit;
- (f) approving other codes of conduct and behaviour which apply to Councillors, employees, contractors and any other parties or organisations associated with Council activity (for employees approval will be subject to agreement through recognised negotiating machinery where appropriate);
- (g) receiving from the Council's Monitoring Officer details of all allegations of any breach of the Code of Conduct;
- (h) determining any matters which may be referred to it by the Monitoring Officer or which may arise under consideration of complaints as to breaches of the Members Code of Conduct or the Protocol for Member / Officer Relations or any Code or Protocol applying to Members and Co-opted Members;
- (i) supporting the Council's Monitoring Officer in discharging his/her role;
- (j) granting dispensations to councillors and co-opted members, including church and parent governor representatives, arising from requests relating to interests set out in the Members Code of Conduct and/or under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011;
- (k) exercising (a) to (i) above in relation to the parish councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those parish councils;

- (l) ensuring the Council's Customer Feedback Policy operates effectively in relation to standards of conduct and behaviour of staff and in particular the Standards Committee may
  - receive an annual report on its operation
  - receive monitoring reports on complaints in relation to standards of conduct and behaviour that have resulted in a final warning to a member of staff
  - adjudicate upon all complaints which remain unresolved
  - require Service Managers to report upon any areas of activity which may have been the subject of criticism in respect of standards of conduct and behaviour;
- (m) reporting to the Council when it considers:-
  - standards of conduct and behaviour in a particular area need reviewing, and
  - the level of commitment necessary to resolve these difficulties should be greater;
- (n) approving the Council's anti-fraud strategy and whistle-blowing procedures and ensure they operate effectively;
- (o) recommending to the Council the payment of compensation or the taking of any other action relating to standards of conduct and behaviour where this is considered appropriate;
- (p) reporting to the Council, should it deem it necessary, on the result of any investigation into the standards of conduct and behaviour of a Member; and
- (q) approving procedures associated with the appointment of an independent remuneration panel for Councillors' Allowances.

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 6 JULY 2015**

PRESENT:- Councillors David Wood (Chair), Michael Bray, Fay Howard, Richard Hurley, Teresa Page, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Carol Shelley and Vera Tomlinson. Messrs Trevor Davies, Mr David Dawson, Mr Richard Hailstone and Mike Compton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eric Shaw and Messrs Paul Morris and Keith Strickland.

**1. 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.

**2. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**3. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**4. 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 items listed below on the grounds that they 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>
9	1 and 2	8

**5. Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15**

The Committee was asked to consider its Draft Annual Report 2014/15, which document provided a record of the work of the Standards Committee for the period June 2014 to May 2015. In particular, the Committee's attention was drawn to the conclusion of the review of the Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints, that the Council's current scheme was both functional and effective and that, subject to some minor amendments, it was, in fact, preferred over the revised scheme suggested by the external consultants in their review report.

Resolved – That the Draft Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15 be agreed and that the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to finalise the document for publication on the Council's website.

## **6. Annual Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services inviting the Committee to agree its Work Programme for 2015/16.

Resolved – That the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2015/16, as appended to the report, be agreed.

## **7. Ethical Update Report**

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.
- The membership of the Standards Committee.
- Annual Governance Statement.
- The Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Training – Induction Training and General Training issues.
- Councillors' Register of Interests.
- New Regulations relating to the dismissal of a statutory officer.

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

(2) That the draft Annual Governance Statement, attached to the report at Appendix 2, be approved to be signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive in September 2015.

(3) That, with regard to specific references in the draft Annual Governance Statement, the Member Development Advisory Group be invited to consider the concerns of some members about the effectiveness of member training and development, and the need to clarify the member functions and roles.

(4) That the Member Development Advisory Group be asked to consider the practicalities and possibility of extending some member training events to include Parish Councils, where such training might be of benefit to Parish Councillors in fulfilling their role, particularly in relation to their interactions with the Borough Council.

(5) That the updated version of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, attached to the report at Appendix 3, be approved and that the updated policy be publicised through the Core Brief and Manager's Bulletin and other publications as appropriate.

(6) That the review of the Whistleblowing Policy be included in the Standards Committee's periodic review of the Council's Codes and Protocols.

(7) That members be advised of the extent to which the whistleblowing policy document, and the details of the avenues available to staff to raise concerns, are publicised amongst employees, particularly with regard to employees who are not accommodated at the civic campus or major council facilities.

## **8. 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 of Whistleblowing cases, breaches of the member/officer relations protocol and Code of Conduct Complaints received since the last Committee and the outcome of any completed investigations in relation to these.

Resolved – That the Ethical Framework Compliance report be noted.

## **Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership**

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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Author:	Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To seek the Standards Committee's endorsement of the appointment of a representative of the (Higher) Education Sector to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances, and to update the Committee on the current membership of the Panel.
- 1.2 The Standards Committee is responsible under Article 9 of the Council's Constitution for approving procedures associated with the appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances.
- 1.3 The operation of effective and transparent arrangements for the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances supports the Council Constitution's commitment to good governance.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and endorse the appointment of Mr. Angus (Gus) Strang, as a representative of the Education Sector, on the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances.
- 2.2 Note and endorse the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2015.

### **3. Detail**

Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances

- 3.1 The Council established the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances in late 2001.
- 3.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel operates under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. These Regulations require that all councils should set up independent panels, and take account of their advice, before changing their councillors' allowances scheme.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Willcox, Direct Dial Telephone Number 01793 463601, [iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk)

## **Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership**

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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- 3.3 The Council's Standards Committee oversees the composition and appointments procedure associated with the establishment and maintenance of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 3.4 The Panel is made up of six members independent of the Council. One each nominated by the Education, Business and Voluntary / Community sectors and three members appointed by the Standards Committee following public advertisement. There is currently one vacancy on the Panel.
- 3.5 The current membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances is Mr Keith Strickland (Chair, appointed in March 2014), Mr John Dernie (Business Sector initially appointed in April 2010), Ms Wendy Hall MBE (Voluntary/ Community Sector initially appointed February 2002), Mr Ram Thiagarajah (appointed in October 2014) and Mr David Wilkie (initially appointed in July 2009). There is one vacancy (Education Sector).
- 3.6 The three members of the Remuneration Panel appointed from stakeholder / partner organisations serve for a term of office of four years. The three members appointed following public advertisement are appointed for a period of three years. There is no restriction on the re-appointment of members.

### Appointment of Education Sector Representative

- 3.7 Ms. Jenny Newlyn stood down from the Independent Remuneration Panel as the Education Sector representative on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. She advised that this was because as she no longer had any direct work, home or family connections with Swindon and she believed that it would be more appropriate for a representative of the sector to serve on the Panel who had such links to the Borough.
- 3.8 Ms Newlyn's decision resulted in contact being made with all local Higher Education Sector contacts within the Borough seeking them to identify individuals who they believed might have the necessary skills and interest to serve on the Panel.
- 3.9 In order to avoid any possible conflicts of interests the Independent Remuneration Panel has since it was first established only sought nominations from the Higher Education sector.
- 3.10 The name of Mr Angus (Gus) Strang was put forward to fill the vacancy. Mr Strang is a Senior Lecturer and Subject Co-ordinator at Oxford Brookes University at the Ferndale Campus in Swindon, a role he has held since 2001. He has also been a resident in Swindon since 2006. He holds an MSc in Healthcare Management which included modules on financial management. He has expressed an interest in becoming more active in the public life of the Borough in which he both lives and works and believes that membership of the Panel would provide him with the opportunity to do this.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Ian Willcox, Direct Dial Telephone Number 01793 463601, [iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:iwillcox@swindon.gov.uk)



# **Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership**

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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3.11 The Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Mr. Keith Strickland, and Mr. Ian Willcox, Committee and Member Services Manager and Advisor to the Independent Remuneration Panel met with Mr Strang on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015, and are happy to recommend and support Mr. Strang's appointment to the Panel.

3.12 The Standards Committee is asked to formally endorse this appointment and is also asked to note and endorse the 2015 membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances.

## **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 The Standards Committee could determine to not endorse the appointment.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel receive an allowance of £200 per year. A budget is available for this.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 No other implications were identified in the preparation of this report ,

### Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been undertaken as the report does not make any recommendations or have implications that affect services.

### Risk Management

5.5 No risk management implications were identified in the preparation of this report.

## **6. Consultees**

6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

# **Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership**

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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**7. Background Papers**

7.1 None.

**8. Appendices**

8.1 None.

## Ethical Framework Update

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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Author:	Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To provide an update on various matters related to the Ethical Framework, to keep the Committee informed of issues of probity in the Council.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the Ethical Framework update.
- 2.2 Endorse the Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis attached at Appendix 2, subject to any comments from members.

### **3. Detail**

Dispensations

- 3.1 Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 enables members who consider that they may have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) to apply for a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 12 December 2012, the Standards Committee authorised the Director of Law and Democratic Services to grant any applications for a dispensation in relation to any meeting at which any matter which has a bearing on the setting of the discounts and exemptions for Council Tax is being or is due to be considered for a four year period. Dispensations are granted in conjunction with the Chair or the Standards Committee and are reported back to the next available meeting.
- 3.3 No dispensations have been granted by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, since the last meeting.

Summary of Code of Conduct Complaints

- 3.4 At its meeting on 21 July 2014, the Committee agreed that, in response to a suggestion put forward by a member of the public during the consultation on the Council's Standards arrangements, a summary of Code of Conduct complaints, including details of complaints received during the year and comparative data for preceding years, be made to each meeting of the Committee. This information is set out below.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor, 01793 463012, [staylor@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:staylor@swindon.gov.uk).

# Ethical Framework Update

Standards Committee

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015

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Year	Complaints	No Further Action	Referred for Monitoring Officer or other Action	Referred for Investigation	Breach following hearing	No action following referral	Local Resolution
2008/09	14	13	0	1	1	0	N/A
2009/10	7	4	1	2	1	1	N/A
2010/11	12	4	4	4	0	4	N/A
2011/12	10	6	2	2	0	2	N/A
2012/13	5	5	0	0	0	0	N/A
2013/14	14	10	1	3	0	1	2
2014/15	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
2015/16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Consideration of any recommended updates to Codes and Protocols

3.1 In the annual work programme approved at the beginning of the year, it was agreed that the Standards Committee would consider any recommended updates to Codes and Protocols to ensure that these remain appropriate and up to date:

- Members' Code of Conduct
- Officers' Code of Conduct
- Monitoring Officer Protocol
- Councillor Role Definitions
- Media Guidelines for Councillors
- Protocol for Member/Officer Relationships
- Local Code of Governance
- Members Planning Code of Good Practice
- Independent Persons' Protocol

3.2 There are no recommended updates at this time. However, in accordance with the Committee's previously utilised review process, in the period to the next meeting of the Committee in January 2016, the Monitoring Officer will consult on each of the above Codes and Protocols with relevant officers, the political groups

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor, 01793 463012, [staylor@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:staylor@swindon.gov.uk).

# Ethical Framework Update

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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on the Council, and also with Parish Councils, and report back to the Standards Committee at its meeting in January 2015.

- 3.3 In the meantime, as part of the review process, Members' views are invited regarding the effectiveness of the codes and protocols (Appendix 1 – circulated to members under separate cover) and whether changes are required to ensure these remain fit for purpose.

## Update to the Council's Ethical Audit Self-Assessment

- 3.4 The Committee last reviewed the Desktop Ethical Audit at its meeting in October 2014. It had previously been agreed that this should be updated on a regular basis.
- 3.5 The latest Desktop Ethical Audit is attached at Appendix 2 for the Committee to review.

## Member Training

- 3.6 Attached at Appendix 3 are the details of the training and development events planned for the 2015-16 Municipal Year. A log of member attendance at these events will be kept and reported to this Committee at a future meeting.
- 3.7 The Member Development Advisory Group will be refreshing the Member Development Strategy as part of its work programme for the 2015/16 year, and looking at other issues such as recording feedback. Work is also progressing on enhancing the support and training for members as a result of making training events offered by external organisations such as the Local Government Information Unit more widely known to all members through the Member's Bulletin.
- 3.8 The Committee is reminded that, at present, a number of sessions are held by the Monitoring Officer each year around the parishes to train parish councillors on the ethical framework, and chairing skills. Borough Councillors who are also parish councillors attend. As usual, attendance at these events will be logged and reported to this Committee at a future meeting.
- 3.9 The Monitoring Officer has conducted two sessions since the last meeting of this committee; namely, on 30<sup>th</sup> July at Wroughton (19 attended including 2 clerks), and on 18<sup>th</sup> August at Haydon Wick (15 attended including 2 clerks).

## The Role of the Independent Person - Workshop

- 3.10 Hoey Ainscough are conducting a series of half-day workshops, at various venues throughout the region, on the role of the Independent Person (IP). The event, for IPs and those who work on standards issues, is a unique opportunity to explore the role in depth, discuss key developments through the year and share experiences with other IPs and officers from across the country.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor, 01793 463012, [staylor@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:staylor@swindon.gov.uk).

# Ethical Framework Update

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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- 3.11 This year's event will cover two key areas in particular – a discussion about the new role IPs will have in the process for dismissal of statutory officers, and an in-depth look at what IPs should be looking for and commenting on when considering the outcome of a local investigation. An experienced independent standards investigator will attend at each event.
- 3.12 Both the Council's Independent Persons were given the opportunity to attend one of the events. Unfortunately, Mr Morris is unable to attend but approval has been obtained for Mr Strickland to attend the event at Taunton Deane Borough Council on the morning of Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Any alternative options are set out in the body of the report.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Any financial or procurement implications will be contained within the existing budget.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 The legal and human rights implications, where applicable, are set out in the body of the report.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other implications that have been identified as important for this report.

### Links to One Swindon, Plans and Policies

- 5.4 Monitoring of issues of probity in the Council underpins the Council's plans and policies and the delivery of One Swindon objectives.

### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report, as it does not recommend a change in Council policy or service.

### Risk Management

- 5.6 A risk assessment has not been completed in relation this report, as it does as it does not recommend a change in Council policy or service. Arrangements for meeting the requirements of the Localism Act and monitoring probity of the

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor, 01793 463012, [staylor@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:staylor@swindon.gov.uk).

# Ethical Framework Update

**Standards Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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Council, ensures that good governance is maintained and protects the reputation of the organisation.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Board Director Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Codes and Protocols (circulated under separate cover)
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Desktop Ethical Audit
- 8.3 Appendix 3 - Member Training Events

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Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis  
Matrix of Key Information held by Swindon Borough Council  
October 2015

	<b>Key Information</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Current position, including action taken since the last review in October 2014.</b>	<b>Area of Review or Action to be identified by the Standards Committee.</b>
1	Constitutions/ Current Decision Making Framework (ie the committees and sub-committees)	Yes	<p>The Constitution is reviewed and updated at least annually and was last adopted in May 2015.</p> <p>The Constitution's operation is monitored by the Monitoring Officer and also by the Corporate Governance Review Working Group whose recommendations feed into the review process.</p> <p>The Council's Audit Committee was first established in May 2006 and continues to operate effectively. It receives assurances from the Standards Committee in relation to matters of internal control such as the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy.</p> <p>The Annual Audit letter summarises the key findings arising from the work carried out by the External Auditor. The Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15 confirmed unqualified opinions for the year ended 31 March 2014 in relation to the Council's financial statements and its VFM conclusion in relation to the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2014.</p> <p>The Council is increasingly working with external partners and stakeholders. Many of the Council's partnership relationships are now managed through the One Swindon Leadership Board. Appropriate governance arrangements are in place.</p>	

2	Procedural Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – May 2015	
3	Contracts Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – May 2015	
4	Employees' Code Of Conduct	Yes	<p>Following consultation with Council employees and unions, the Employee Code of Conduct was initially approved by the Standards Committee in July 2006. The Code of Conduct is issued to all Council employees, who are required to sign to confirm that they have read and will act in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help officers to understand how they can fulfil their ethical obligations in performing their role</li> <li>• set clear expectations for their conduct as a public employee in the Council and</li> <li>• provide guidance to help you deal properly with ethical issues you may encounter in your work.</li> </ul> <p>The Code is submitted to Council annually for approval.</p>	
5	Members' Code Of Conduct plus Local Guidance	Yes	<p>The new Members Code of Conduct was adopted in June 2012, taking effect on 1 July 2012, under the Localism Act 2011. The Code is reviewed annually. It was last reviewed in January 2015 and subsequently adopted at the Annual Council meeting in May 2015.</p> <p>Procedures for determining complaints against councillors were the subject of review during the 2013/14 Municipal Year. A number of changes to the "Arrangements for dealing with member Code of Conduct complaints" were agreed by Standards Committee at its meeting on 21 July 2014 and these have now been incorporated into the process.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has provided guidance and training on the Members Code of Conduct to Officers and Members, together with Parish Clerks and Parish</p>	

			Councillors. Refresher training is also regularly provided.	
6	Confidential Reporting Procedure	Yes	<p>The Whistleblowing Policy was first approved in November 2001 and is kept under regular review.</p> <p>Complaints received are investigated and the outcome reported to the Standards Committee. Employees are reminded about the procedure via staff communications, including Team Briefings.</p> <p>In September 2005, the Committee approved the Council's subscription to the Public Concern at Work Helpline to provide a formal method of confidential reporting for staff who do not feel able to raise issues directly with the Council. The Council has maintained this provision, but also makes available the following support via a contract with Care First, the Council's employee assistance programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advice and information service</li> <li>• A counselling service</li> <li>• On-line information</li> <li>• A manager support service</li> </ul>	
7	Terms Of Reference of the Standards Committee	Yes	<p>The current Standards Committee was established in July 2012, under the terms of the Localism Act 2011, giving Councils the option of whether to retain a Standards Committee or nominate another Committee to oversee the determination of Code of Conduct complaints. The Borough Council's Standards Committee retained much of its extended terms of reference, beyond the determination of complaints, in particular in relation to its monitoring of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Whistleblowing Complaints.</p>	
8	Scheme Of Delegation	Yes	<p>This was updated in April 2015 to take account of the revised management structures and subsequently approved as part of the 2015/2016 Constitution at the</p>	

			meeting of Annual Council meeting in May 2015.	
9	Members' Register Of Interests	Yes	<p>Held on file and on the Council's website. Regular reminders are issued.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act the Council also now publishes Register of Interest forms for all Parish Councillors in the Borough Area.</p>	
10	Recorded Declaration Of Interests	Yes	Interests are recorded at meetings and are recorded on the website.	
11	Members' Induction Process	Yes	<p>All new Councillors are provided with a comprehensive induction programme in relation to the ethical framework and the decision-making process, as well as service specific issues.</p> <p>New Councillors elected in by-elections attend Induction training following their election.</p>	
12	Officers' Induction Process	Yes	<p>A Corporate induction process is in place and departmental induction processes are also in place.</p> <p>Reference is included in the Officers' Induction Process to the ethical framework. During staff induction it is checked that staff have received a copy of the code of conduct (which they usually have with their contracts) and they are reminded that it is their responsibility to read it and speak with their manager if they have any concerns. Staff are also advised of the disclosure of gifts etc information, and are also advised to contact their managers with any concerns regarding this, or any special arrangements made (for example, working in a care home at Christmas where people may buy them lots of gifts/goodies).</p> <p>It is the responsibility of managers to enforce the code of conduct and ethics and probity issues with staff.</p>	

			The Monitoring Officer liaises with the Head of People, Performance and Engagement on evaluating the implementation across departments of training on the ethical framework within the Officers' Induction Programme and on the monitoring of the officer induction process.	
13 / 14	Members' Continuing Development and Training	Yes	<p>A range of development / training opportunities are offered and a record of attendance kept.</p> <p>Training for Councillors is facilitated by Committee and Member Services, in consultation with a cross-party Member Development Advisory Group. This agrees the programme for training at the beginning of each year and monitors the success of each course and the uptake from Councillors.</p>	
15	Officers' Continuing Development	Yes	The Council's behaviour framework sets out the values and behaviours expected from officers and members. This currently forms part of the annual appraisal in place across the Council, and identifies development needs and provides structured options to accessing appropriate training.	
16	Officers' Training	Yes	A Learning & Development online resource has been launched, which provides practical learning and development materials. There is also a <a href="#">Learning Zone</a> with links to coaching and networking e-learning modules developed by Good Practice. Other courses are available direct.	
17	Other Council Specific Additional Codes And Protocols		<p><u>Monitoring Officer Protocol</u> - last reviewed in January 2015. Approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2015.</p> <p><u>Guidance to Councillors on Dealing with the Media</u> – first adopted February 2002, and last reviewed and updated</p>	

			<p>by the Committee in January 2015. Approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2015.</p> <p><u>Protocol on Member / Officer Relations</u> - Introduced September 2002 and regularly reviewed and updated. This was last updated in January 2015. Approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2015. The Association of Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) produced a model code, some of which is based on this Council's protocol.</p> <p><u>Members' Planning Code of Good Practice</u> - adopted February 2004, and regularly reviewed and updated. This was last reviewed in February 2015 and subsequently approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2015. . .</p> <p><u>Anti-Fraud and Bribery Strategy</u> – adopted November 2001 and regularly reviewed and updated. The strategy is reviewed annually to ensure that it sets out best practice and complies with relevant legislation. A Fraud Response plan was developed by Internal Audit at the same time to assist managers in knowing how to deal with allegations of wrongdoing.</p> <p>The outcome of investigations are reported to the Standards Committee.</p> <p>A Swindon Internal Audit Services Bulletin is issued to Members and Officers approximately twice a year to promote fraud awareness by communicating information on frauds elsewhere to officers and Members, and enable similar frauds to be prevented.</p>	
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<b>Training and Development Programme for Councillors 2015/2016</b>		
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
11 May 2015 2.00pm Ctte Room 1	Induction (1) for Newly Elected Councillors	Corporate Board Director of Law and Democratic Services The Mayor and Lead Members
14 May 2015 5.00pm Ctte Room 2	Induction (2) for Newly Elected Councillors	Stuart McKellar, Board Director, Resources Communications Officers Karen McMahon, Head of Customer and Business Services Patrick Weir, Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering Stephen Taylor, Director of Law and Democratic Services
27 May 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 2	Induction for New Members of the Planning Committee and any councillor with an interest in planning process	Richard Bell, Planning Officer Kehinde Awojobi, Legal Department
Prior to 1st meeting of each Committee	Overview and Scrutiny induction	Scrutiny Officer / Chair
8 June 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 6	Chairing Skills	Stephen Taylor, Director of Law and Democratic Services
9 July 2015 4.00pm Ctte Room 5	Media Training	Gail Downey, Whirlwind Productions
9 September 2015 5.15pm Ctte Room 1	Induction for New Members of the Licensing Committee	Kathryn Ashton, Licensing Officer

1 October 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 1	Equality and Diversity	Nick Stephenson, Change Lead, Equality and Diversity
8 October 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 2	Safeguarding Adults	Doug Bale
11 November 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 3	New Members Induction – six month review	Stephen Taylor, Director of Law and Democratic Services
10 December 2015 6.00pm Ctte Room 6	Future role of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	Darran Gunter, Chief Fire Officer (Designate)
19 January 2016 6.00pm Room TBC	Understanding the Capital Budget	Paul Smith, Head of Technical Finance
TBC	Swindon Building Control	Liz Burton, Technical Support and Improvement Officer
TBC	Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee	Rebecca Mathis / Ann Crowley
To be offered through Political Group meetings	Corporate Parenting	Karen Reeve, Head of Children, Families and Community Health
Ad-hoc – organised at request of member	Customer Services and the Members Hotline process	Lisa Pittard, Operations Manager

### External providers

Information on training and events provided by external organisations such as the LGA and LGiU are circulated on a weekly basis in the Member's Bulletin. Members are then invited to apply, and attendance approved through a Cabinet Member Briefing Note.



## **Dates for member training**

Potential dates earmarked for future member training (all 6pm start time):

<b>2016</b>
8 February
3 March
21 April

## **Potential subjects for member training – delivered by officers**

- Public Health and the mandated public health responsibilities that the council now has.
- Maximising the benefits of Swindon Borough Council's property portfolio.
- The role of Swindon Borough Council in the economic development of the Borough.
- Improving skills and increasing employment.
- Child Protection Level 1 – on line.
- CSE - on line.
- Understanding how to make a referral to children's social care - direct training. 2 hours anytime in year.
- General awareness-raising of Adult Services.
- An introduction to housing services.

## **Learning Zone Modules**

- Data Protection.
- Freedom of Information and Information Security.
- Officer training sessions also suitable for members.

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## Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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