
20th February 2014

Ethics Committee

Executive Director Approving Submission of the report:
Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:
Not applicable

Title:
Work programme for the Ethics Committee

Is this a key decision?
No

Executive Summary:

This report is to suggest areas of work for the Ethics Committee for the rest of the current Municipal Year, and for the Municipal Year 2014-2015

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to

1.1 approve the draft work programme attached as Appendix 1 ;

1.2 delegate responsibility for reviewing and amending the work programme to the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee

List of Appendices included:

Draft work programme

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

1. Context (or background)

1.1 The Council's Ethics Committee was set up following the new standards regime under the Localism Act 2011. The Committee has only met once since the new regime has been in force, on the 30th August 2012, when it adopted the new Complaints Protocol following the introduction of the Council's new Code of Conduct.

1.2 The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in section 2.9.1.6 of the Council's Constitution and include the consideration of matters which are relevant to the ethical governance of the Council, its members or employees. This report attaches a proposed programme of work for the Committee, in order that it may meet its objectives set out in the Terms of Reference and ensure the Council complies with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, which requires it to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted members.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 The Committee's draft work programme takes account of the need to promote standards and addresses this in a number of ways. It is a draft work programme and is flexible in terms of suggestions from members of the Ethics Committee as to additional or substitute areas which they would want to consider and receive reports on. However, certain items have been included which will help the Committee focus on its key aim to promote high standards of conduct for all members and employees of the Council.

2.2 First it is proposed that there is a standing item for each meeting, by way of a Monitoring Officer / Code of Conduct update, which will incorporate a review of complaints to date and an update on any national issues on the subject of elected member conduct which may be of interest. This will be flexible and can cover additional areas which the Committee is particularly concerned about, as they arise.

2.3 Secondly it is proposed that the Ethics Committee have an overview of Gifts and Hospitality for both officers and members, in order that it may review how the two Codes of Conduct are being put into effect on a day to day basis, and suggest improved or different practices as it may consider to be appropriate.

2.4 Thirdly, items have been included to ensure a review of the position of the parish councils, a review of the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and during the next Municipal Year 2014-2015, a review of any Annual Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 There has been no consultation as there is no proposal to implement at this stage which would require a consultation.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Not Applicable

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, as there is no statutory obligation on the Committee to adopt a work programme. However, the Council must comply with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and adopting a clear programme of work would assist in compliance for the Council as a whole, in its duty to promote high standards of ethical conduct.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

If implemented, the work programme should impact on the promotion of high standards in public life in accordance with the Localism Act, as it will enable the Committee to monitor behaviour across the Council and recommend changes in practice where these may be required as a result of issues or problems of an ethical nature.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

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Members: Name	Councillor Hetherton	Chair of Ethics Committee	6.12.13	11.12.13

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Appendix 1

Draft Work Programme for remainder of Municipal Year 2013/14, and new Municipal year 2014/2015

Meeting no. and date	Topics	Verbal or written	Lead officer
5. 20th December 2013	Standards in Public Life- update from national body, new Government Guidance	Written	Christine Forde
	Code of Conduct update- adoption of new complaint form, review of national complaint cases	Written	Christine Forde
	Proposed Work Programme for Ethics Committee for next Municipal Year	Written	Christine Forde
	Recruitment of independent person update.	Verbal	Christine Forde
6. 28th March 2014			
	Annual Report on the work of the Ethics Committee, for presentation to Full Council at next meeting Possible review of Terms of Reference of Ethics Committee	Written	Christine Forde
	Gifts and Hospitality for Officers- Adoption of possible new forms /Register and review of guidance note	Written	Christine Forde
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct Update	Written	Christine Forde
	Gifts and Hospitality for Members- review of declarations during 2012-2013 Municipal Year	Written	Christine Forde
2014/2015			
1.	Adoption/Review of Ethics Committee Work Programme for 2014/15, consideration of training needs for Ethics Committee Members	Written	Christine Forde
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct / Member Complaints Update	Written	Christine Forde
2.	Gifts and Hospitality for Members- review of declarations made so far in 2014-15	Written	Christine Forde
	Code of Conduct for Employees-	Written	Christine Forde

Meeting no. and date	Topics	Verbal or written	Lead officer
	review of its operation over the last 12 months and any review recommendations		
3.	Officers Gifts and Hospitality - Inspection of Registers for first 6 months of 2014/2015	Written	Christine Forde
	6 monthly review of Register of DPIs and Parish compliance with Localism Act 2011	Written	Christine Forde
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct / members Complaints Update/ consideration of training needs of elected members on ethical standards issues	Written	Christine Forde
4.	Standards in Public Life- update from national body usually published in August each year	Written	Christine Forde
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct / members Complaints Update	Written	Christine Forde