

---

Ethics Committee

29 June 2023

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A- Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Chief Legal Officer

**Ward(s) affected:**

**Not applicable**

**Title:**

Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2023/24

---

**Is this a key decision?**

No

---

**Executive Summary:**

This report suggests areas of work for the Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24. The Committee is asked to consider the draft Work Programme and make any suggestions for additional or alternative reports.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

**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

## **Report title: Draft Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2023/24**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in 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, designed to assist the Committee to meet its objectives set out in the Terms of Reference, and to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted members.
- 1.2 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.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 The Work Programme includes regular items on:
- Code of Conduct/ Monitoring Officer Update
  - Declarations of gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers
  - Annual report to full Council
  - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Report
- 2.2 In addition the Ethics Committee factor into the Work Programme a number of matters where work is being, or about to be, undertaken across the Council, namely:
- Monitoring the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (including any legislative changes arising from the CSPL's report and / or recommendations of January 2019)
  - Monitoring, and responding to, the Local Government Association's work on Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship
  - The work of a Member/Officer group which is developing a local response to the LGA's guidance on intimidation in public life
- 2.3 The Work Programme was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 30 March 2023 with the inclusion of the following item for the Committee's December meeting:
- 'Chamber Skills and Etiquette – A Guide for Councillors' – training was provided for Councillors on 7 and 14 June 2023. Once feedback has been collected, a guide will be produced for consideration by the Committee.
- 2.4 The Committee is asked to consider whether there are any other matters that they would want to consider during the year or items that they would want to defer. The Committee may wish to consider including the following matter:
- Since the last Committee meeting the Jo Cox Foundation has launched the Jo Cox Commission on Civility. This is a review that will look specifically at the increasing problem of threats and intimidating behaviour towards elected officials, particularly MPs. The first evidence gathering phase is this summer. More detailed information is included at Appendix 2.

## **2.5 Recommendation**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

None

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Not applicable

## **5. Comments from the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer**

### **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 the continuation of 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 One Coventry Plan?**

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 will facilitate the promotion of high standards amongst elected members in accordance with the Localism Act.

### **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) climate change and the environment**

None

### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None at this stage

**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

**Name and job title:** Chief Legal Officer

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

**Tel and email contact:** 024 7697 7271 [julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law and Governance	31/05/23	31/05/23
Sarah Harriott	Deputy Team Leader (Job-Share), Regulatory – Civil, Governance and Information	Law and Governance	31/05/23	31/05/23
Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	31/05/23	05/06/23
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance: Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	19/06/23	19/06/23
Cllr S Nazir	Chair: Ethics Committee		12/06/23	23/06/23

This report is published on the council's website: [www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)

## Appendix 1

### Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24

Meeting no. and date	Topics
<b>2023/4</b>	
<b>1. June 2023</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Annual Report of the Committee
	Work Programme 2023/24
	Local Code Of Corporate Governance
<b>2. September 2023</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality -Inspection of Registers for first 6 months of 2023
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for first 6 months of 2023
	Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship Review
	Work Programme 2023/24
<b>3. December 2023</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report
	Committee on Standards in Public Life Annual Report
	Chamber Skills and Etiquette – A Guide for Councillors
	Work Programme 2023/24
<b>4. March 2024</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update.
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality -Inspection of Registers for last 6 months of 2023
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for last 6 months of 2023
	Work Programme 2023/24