

	
STANDARDS COMMITTEE	20 TH NOVEMBER 2009
Report of the Interim Head of Civic Democratic and Legal Services	

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Summary

1. There are a number of outstanding issues and reports on the Committee's Forward Plan and this report summarises them and explains the current position.

Background

- 2 The Standards Committee should have had a meeting in October but this was cancelled as the previous Monitoring Officer had left the Council and the reports which were due to come to that meeting had not been prepared. In addition, the meeting on the 18th December has been cancelled and matters on that agenda brought forward to this one where that has been possible. This agenda contains a review of the operation of the local assessments of complaints framework (which was due to come to the Committee in October) and a report on the Member Development Steering Group (which was due to come in December).
- 3 There are one or two other issues which still require to be reported. These include the Review of the Planning Code of Practice as there has not been enough time to do this and it is proposed that this is brought back to the Committee for its January meeting at the earliest..
- 4 This report attempts to deal with other outstanding issues which were listed as requiring reports on the Committee's Forward Plan but which can be dealt with in one summary report.

Induction pack for Independent members

- 5 The October meeting was due to receive a report on an induction pack for new independent members. The report was to consider a draft list of documents to be included in any such pack. A member's Handbook is at the planning stage for all members, including co-opted and independent members and it would be a duplication of activity to prepare a separate pack for independent members of this Committee. It is therefore proposed that the Standards Committee reviews the

proposed contents of the members handbook when it is available and makes suggestions for additional items.

Member-Officer protocol

- 6 The proposed agenda for the December meeting included a report on the results of the Monitoring Officer's discussions with the Audit Commission regarding monitoring the effectiveness of the new member/officer protocol. However as the protocol was only agreed at the Council meeting on 15th October it is a bit premature to be discussing how to monitor its impact.
- 7 No dissemination or training programme seems to have been agreed to support the introduction of the new protocol and this is now a priority. This may also be something on which the Audit Commission could assist . I have been in contact with the Council's auditor and will have met with him before the committee meeting. In addition, there are one or two proposed training events within the member Development programme which we may use to launch the new protocol more formally. Again I will be able to report this in more detail to the meeting following meetings that I will have had by then.
- 8 The previous Monitoring Officer had suggested that the auditor provide information on Councils with notable practice with which York could share information. I have looked at the list provided by the auditor and will bring more details to the meeting.

Joint Committees

- 9 Another outstanding item for the December meeting was about reporting the Monitoring Officers inquiries about the possibility of pursuing joint standards committees with the Police and Fire Authorities. At this stage, no inquiries seem to have been made. However it is clear from the North Yorkshire Police authority website that they intend to pursue a joint standards committee across all the Yorkshire police authorities. There would seem little point in this Council's Standards Committee separately pursuing a joint standards committee and involvement in a cross Yorkshire police authority joint committee may mean that issues for the Council become lost. Nothing has been done in relation to the Fire Authority but this can be pursued if the Committee still wish to.

Options

- 10 The Standards Committee is being asked to agree whether and how best to pursue its current work programme. It either has the option to do this or develop an alternative or amended one.:

Analysis

- 11 Essentially this report has been about pursuing the Standards Committee's current work programme. Agreeing these recommendations would maintain that.

Corporate Priorities

- 12 The Standards Committee's work programme is an essential part of the 'Effective organisation' strand of the Corporate Strategy. In addition, effective ethical governance is a key aspect of corporate governance overall which is an important priority for the Council.

Implications

13.

- (a) **Financial** There may be some cost involved in promoting the new officer – member protocol but this has yet to be determined and in any event will need to be contained in existing budgets.
- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** There may be some involvement of HR in taking forward the officer element of the member-officer protocol but these discussions still need to take place.
- (c) **Equalities** None
- (d) **Legal** – None beyond those contained in the report.
- (e) **Crime and Disorder** None
- (f) **Information Technology (IT)** None
- (g) **Property** None
- (h) **Other** None

Risk Management

14. There are no risks associated with agreeing the recommendations.

Recommendations

15. The Standards Committee is asked to agree:
- A) to receive a report on the Review of the Planning Code of Practice at its January meeting.

- B) review the proposed Members' Handbook to ensure that it contains appropriate material for members of the Standards Committee..
- C) further action in relation to the member-officer protocol following an oral update from the Monitoring Officer at the meeting
- D) whether to pursue the issue of a joint committee with the police and fire authorities

Reason:

To take forward the Committee's work programme

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	√	Date 9/11/09
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None			
Wards Affected: <i>List wards or tick box to indicate all</i>			All x
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Background Papers:

Standards Committee work plan agreed on 28 August 2009
Minutes of previous Standards Committee meetings

(Available on the Council's website)

Annexes

None