

Implementation of the New Standards Arrangements

Summary

1. This report provides Members with information regarding progress with the implementation of the new standards arrangements by Councils in York.

Background

2. As Members know, on 1st July the previous statutory standards arrangements which have existed for the last ten years were abolished. Although there continue to be legal requirements in respect of certain standards matters a great deal is now left to local discretion. New local arrangements have had to be implemented with some elements being introduced at a very late stage owing to the late introduction of legislation.

Codes of Conduct

3. The City Council adopted a new Code at its July Council meeting. This Code followed the draft recommended to it by the Committee. The Committee should timetable a review of the Code as part of its forward plan. Each Parish Council has also had to adopt its own Code. The Parishes have been asked to confirm that they have done so and advise on the format that has been followed. Those Councils who have responded to date have confirmed that they have based their Code on the NALC model.

Registers of Interests

4. New Regulations require “disclosable pecuniary interests” as defined in regulations to be notified to the Monitoring Officer. Codes of conduct can (and do) require additional interests to be registered. All City Councillors have completed a new register of

interests and these are available online. Parish Clerks are co-ordinating this process in their own Councils on behalf of the Monitoring Officer. An update on progress will be provided at the meeting.

5. The Monitoring Officer has the power to determine that sensitive interests do not need to be registered. The Monitoring Officer has granted one request to use those powers and, in response to a second enquiry, has indicated that he is not satisfied that the grounds have been made out.

Guidance and Training

6. Guidance has been issued to City Councillors on the new arrangements (Annex 1). The intention is to add to that guidance as issues arise and in response to questions. NALC have issued guidance in support of their model code. CLG have also issued guidance (Annex 2).
7. A training session for City Councillors will be arranged as part of the Member development programme. The Local Councils Association has a training event at the end of September which will include a session on the ethical framework led by Paul Hoey, formerly of the Standards Board.

Appointment of Independent Persons

8. The Council is advertising for independent persons. The closing date for applications is the 10th September. The Committee will receive an update on this matter at the meeting.

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to note the report.

Reason: To ensure that Members are kept updated on the implementation of the new arrangements.

Contact Details

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Report Approved Yes **Date** 06.09.12

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:
None

Annexes

Annex 1 Guidance issued to City Councillors
Annex 2 CLG Guidance