

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE

13 September 2010

#### **Officers' Code of Conduct**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Members regarding the outcome of the Monitoring Officer's consideration of the Officers' Code of Conduct and to provide Members with information, as requested, in relation to the extent that standards information is included in officers' employment documentation.

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At its last meeting, the Committee received an update report from the Monitoring Officer regarding the Officers' "Standards of Conduct Procedure" (Code of Conduct), also seeking direction from Members as to whether revisions previously considered by the Committee should be taken forward at this stage. The Committee agreed that the current Procedure should be considered by the Monitoring Officer, to determine whether any information required updating or adding, with an overall review of that Procedure being undertaken when the new Model Code of Conduct for Officers is introduced.
- 2.2 Members also requested that information be obtained as to the extent that standards information, particularly information relating to the Code, is incorporated into officers' recruitment and employment documentation.

#### **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 The Monitoring Officer has reviewed the Officers' Standards of Conduct Procedure and concluded that the document is sound and covers all key areas such as
- General Standards, including reference to the Whistle-blowing Policy
  - Disclosure of Information
  - Political Neutrality
  - Relationships, eg with Councillors, Local Communities and Service Users and Contractors
  - Appointment and Other Employment Matters
  - Outside Commitments
  - Personal Interests
  - Equality Issues
  - Separation of Roles during Tendering
  - Corruption
  - Gifts and Bequests
  - Use of Financial Resources
  - Hospitality
  - Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving
  - Complaints about Malpractice
  - Contact with the Press and Media

- Talks to Outside bodies, Interviews, Publications
  - Smoking
- 3.2 Certain legislative references in sections 11 (Corruption) and 12 (Gifts and Hospitality) to the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 will shortly be out of date, when the Bribery Act 2010 comes into force later this year. The purpose of the Act is to reform the criminal law of bribery to provide for a new consolidated scheme of bribery offences. These amendments can be picked up at the relevant time and included in the next refresh of the Standards of Conduct Procedure.
- 3.3 It is therefore recommended that the Standards of Conduct Procedure be more substantially reviewed in the future, when the situation is clearer regarding the proposed changes to the standards regime and the introduction of a new model Officers' Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 Also at the Committee's last meeting, Members queried the extent to which standards information is incorporated into officers' recruitment and employment documentation. Enquiries have been made and the Monitoring Officer has been informed that employees' Statements of Particulars refer to the Standards of Conduct Procedure and highlight that it can be accessed via the Intranet. Statements of Particulars also specify other documents procedure that the employee should access. No reference to the Standards of Conduct Procedure is found in employee job descriptions or person specifications. There is also no specific wording relating to standards information in the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 That the Officers' Standards of Conduct Procedure be reviewed in the future, when the situation is clearer regarding the proposed changes to the standards regime and the introduction of a new model Officers' Code of Conduct.

CAROLE DUNN  
Monitoring Officer

#### Background Documents:

Standards of Conduct Procedure  
Minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee

County Hall  
Northallerton

25 August 2010