

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

19 September 2014

Annual Report of Standards Committee**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To request the Standards Committee to consider whether or not to reintroduce the publication of an Annual Report by the Committee.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Prior to the adoption of the current 'light touch' ethical framework under the Localism Act 2011, the previous Standards Committee presented an Annual Report to full Council, usually at its annual meeting, regarding the work of the Committee. It was thought to be good practice to inform the Council of the work of the then Committee, as it assisted in raising the profile and awareness of the Committee and ethical standards generally.

- 2.2 The prior form of Annual Report set out the following information:

- background to the then Standards Committee;
- the Committee's Terms of Reference;
- current membership of the Committee;
- the role of the Monitoring Officer in supporting the Committee;
- the dates the Committee met;
- an account of the work which was undertaken by the Standards Committee during the previous 12 month period, including matters relating to:
 - the Committee's Work Programme;
 - appointment of Independent Members;
 - the granting and monitoring of dispensations;
 - review of ethical framework developments;
 - the Register of Members' Interests;
 - Member training in relation to standards issues;
 - Communications and awareness raising;
 - The Standards Bulletin;
 - Complaints in relation to the Members' Code of Conduct; and future developments.

3.0 ANNUAL REPORT

- 3.1 The Standards Committee is requested to consider whether it would be appropriate to reintroduce the publication of an Annual Report by the Committee for presentation to the Council.
- 3.2 A relevant authority has a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted members of the authority. The adoption of a code dealing with the conduct expected of Members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that official capacity is only one part of the

discharge of the statutory duty. It is suggested that the presentation of an Annual Report by the Committee to full Council would assist in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and would also ensure that the Council has an overview of work undertaken by the Committee in discharging the Council's standards responsibilities.

3.3 Should the Committee be minded to produce an Annual Report on its work to the Council, the Committee is requested to consider the scope of the report and the types of information it would wish to include. Members may find the checklist at paragraph 2.2 helpful in this regard, although given the more streamlined standards regime under the Localism Act, any Annual Report is unlikely to be as comprehensive in terms of activities as the then Committee has been able to present previously.

3.4 Members' views are welcomed.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the Committee determines whether it is appropriate to present an Annual Report regarding the work of the Committee to full Council.

BARRY KHAN

Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

- The Localism Act 2011
- Minutes of NYCC Standards Committee

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

12 September 2014