

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

26th November 2020

Report on Progress of Best Practice Recommendations

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain (for Governance)
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	n/a
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	n/a
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Chairman of the Committee on Standards for Public Life has requested an update be provided in respect of the implementation of the recommendations published in his report of January 2019 and the Council's response is attached at appendix 1 to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee RESOLVES that

- 2.1 the Committee approve the amended arrangements for handling Member complaints; and**
- 2.2 the Council's response to the Chairman of the Committee of Standards for Public Life's recommendations be approved and returned to him before the deadline of 30th November 2020.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 In January 2019 The Committee on Standards for Public Life published its Local Government Ethical Standards report. In that report, a number of recommendations were made and identified some best practice recommendations to improve ethical standards in local government. The best practice represented a benchmark for ethical practice which the Committee expected all local authorities to implement.
- 3.2 The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee considered a report on those findings at its meeting on 10th October 2019 and carried out a review of the Code of Conduct to reflect the CSPL Best Practice Recommendations and made recommendations on to Council for those changes be approved. Those changes were agreed at the Council meeting held on 20th November 2019 and the Constitution updated accordingly.

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

26th November 2020

- 3.3 Whilst the Council has already got in place the majority of the best practice recommendations, as indicated in the proposed response at appendix 1 to this report, further consideration has been given to them, which has resulted in the amendment to the Council's "Arrangement for handling complaints against members" attached at appendix 2 to this report and the proposed change is highlighted at 4.12 of that document.

Financial Implications

- 3.4 It is not anticipated that there will be any financial implications.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 CSPL made a number of recommendations and identified best practice to improve ethical standards in local government. Their recommendations were made to Government and to specific groups of public officeholders. They recommended a number of changes to primary legislation, which would be subject to Parliamentary timetabling; but also to secondary legislation and the Local Government Transparency Code, which could be implemented more swiftly.
- 3.6 Councils are expected to consider the findings and recommendations and compliance with them or failure to comply with them would be a consideration upon any process involving the code such as a review or an appeal.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 There are no specific service or operational implications.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 No Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

None.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - CSPL local government ethical standards 15 best practice recommendations

Appendix 2 – updated - Arrangements for handling Member Complaints

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