

North Tyneside Council Report to Annual Council Date: 21 May 2015

ITEM 15

Title: Standards
Committee – Annual
Report 2014/2015

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs N Redfearn

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vivienne Geary, Head of Law and Governance (Tel: (0191) 643 5339)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

To submit the Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2014/15.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

Council is requested to note and receive the Standards Committee's Annual Report 2014/15.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 5 May 2015.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report does not relate directly to any of the themes/programmes/projects in the Our North Tyneside Plan.

1.5 Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/2015

- 1.5.1 Central Government's modernisation agenda for local government in the late 1990's included the introduction of a new ethical framework for local government. This followed on from the Nolan report on Standards in Public Life published in 1995. The Local Government Act 2000 provided the statutory basis for this and a key element was that Authorities were required to set up Standards Committees.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the Local Government Act 2000 with effect from 1 July 2012 and the Council abolished the Standards Committee and established a Governance Committee in response to the new requirements in relation to ethical governance.

In September 2013 following a further review of the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members, Council agreed changes to the Local Arrangements and also renamed the Governance Committee as the Standards Committee.

The Committee is responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Authority, helping to secure adherence to the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Code within North Tyneside, promoting and reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy for Members, reviewing complaints made against Members in respect of alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct and conducting hearings following investigation and determining complaints made against Councillors in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15 is attached at Appendix 1. The report provides further background information regarding the Standards Committee and sets out the work undertaken by the Committee and its Sub-Committees over the municipal year. The report highlights the ways in which the Standards Committee has influenced and shaped policy and the promotion and maintenance of ethical standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives.

1.5.2 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

Option 1

To note and receive the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2014/15.

Option 2

To refer the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2014/15 back to the Standards Committee for further consideration.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.6 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2014/15 provides a record of the work of the Standards Committee over the past year.

1.7 Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15.

1.8 Contact officers:

Stephen Ballantyne – Lawyer Specialist – Governance and Employment, Law and Governance, tel. (0191) 643 5329.

Alison Campbell – Finance Business Manager, tel. (0191) 643 7038.

1.9 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

The Localism Act 2011

The Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The Localism Act 2011 places a statutory duty on the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its elected and co-opted members and to appoint Independent Persons.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Standards Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2015 considered and approved the annual report and referred to this Council meeting.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

There has been no external consultation in relation to the annual report as it relates to the internal governance of the Authority.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity issues arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are not crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability issues arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive X
- Head of Service X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Head of Corporate Strategy X