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**Report of Helen Bradley, Director of Legal and Democratic Service  
and Monitoring Officer**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To agree the Work Programme for 2024/25.

**Executive summary**

- 2 There is no requirement for the Committee to have a work programme. However, it is considered good practice to have one as it helps demonstrate the work done by the Committee in promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct throughout the year.
- 3 On 8 June 2023, the Committee approved a work programme in relation to the roles and functions of the Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

**Recommendations**

- 4 The Standards Committee is recommended to:
  - (a) note the progress against the work programme approved on 08 June 2023 for 2023/24.
  - (b) Comment on the draft work programme for 2024/25 shown at Appendix 3 of the report.
  - (c) Agree the work programme for 2024/25.

## Background

- 5 The terms of reference of the Standards Committee are set out in Article 7 of the Constitution. They are as follows:
- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members;
  - (b) assisting Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct and where appropriate, the Planning Code of Practice;
  - (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Practice;
  - (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Practice;
  - (e) advising, training or arranging to train Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and Planning Code of Practice;
  - (f) granting dispensations to Members and Co-opted Members of the Council from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and Planning Code of Practice in circumstances where this function has not been delegated to the Monitoring Officer;
  - (g) to approve the arrangements under which allegations of a failure to comply with Council's Code of Conduct for Members can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made, pursuant to section 28(6) of the Localism Act 2011.
  - (h) To approve the appointment of at least one independent person to discharge the functions set out in section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.
  - (i) the assessment and/or referral for investigation of allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members, if requested to undertake this function by the Monitoring Officer;
  - (j) the determination of allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members;
  - (k) dealing with any alleged breach by a Member of a Council Protocol, in accordance with procedures approved by the Committee;

(l) overview of the Officers' Code of Conduct;

(m) overview of the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations.

### **Work Programme 2023/24**

- 6 The Committee reviewed the progress against the work programme for 2022/23 at its meeting on 08 June 2023. A copy of the work programme with the details of when the items were considered is shown at Appendix 2 of this report for information.
- 7 The majority of the items on the work programme were completed with the exception of the approval of the work programme for 2024/25 which was deferred to the Committee's meeting in June 2024.
- 8 The Committee also considered further items (shown in red in Appendix 2) including the approval of the Procedure for Member Code of Conduct Complaints, the recruitment of the Independent Persons and agreed to extend the term of one of the Independent Persons for a further 2 years.

### **Work Programme 2024/25**

- 9 The Committee is asked to agree the work programme for the municipal year. A copy of the draft work programme for 2023/24 is shown at Appendix 3.
- 10 The work programme provides the Committee with a number of key items to be reviewed throughout the year as well as standing agenda items.
- 11 The Committee agreed at its meeting in December 2022 to add the Debate Not Hate Campaign as a standing item. The Debate Not Hate Campaign is an important campaign, and it is proposed that the Debate Not Hate Campaign remains as a standing item on the work programme but with the caveat that it is dependent on information being available to report to the Committee.
- 12 The work programme includes items related to the Debate Not Hate Campaign such as the Zero-tolerance to abuse policy and civility in public life. The Committee will also be asked to review key governance documents which are being reviewed/prepared in anticipation of the County Council elections in May 2025.
- 13 It is proposed that a review takes place in September 2024 of the 'Procedure for Member Code of Conduct Complaints' which was last reviewed by the Committee at its meeting in March 2023. The review will ensure that the Procedure remains fit for purpose, legally compliant and consistent with best practice.

14 It is recognised that there is flexibility in the work programme to include any other issues which arise throughout the year.

**Background papers**

- None.

**Other useful documents**

- None.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Council has a duty under s. 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and to adopt a code of conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles. It is anticipated that a planned work programme to deal with the specific roles and functions of the Committee, as set out in the Constitution, will assist compliance with this duty.

### **Finance**

None.

### **Consultation**

None.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None.

### **Climate Change**

None.

### **Human Rights**

None.

### **Crime and Disorder**

None.

### **Staffing**

None.

### **Accommodation**

None.

### **Risk**

None.

### **Procurement**

None.

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## Appendix 2: Work Programme 2023/24

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8 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Annual Report.</li><li>• Procedure for Member Code of Conduct Complaints</li><li>• Appointment of Independent Persons to the Standards Committee</li></ul>
8 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Extension of the Term of the Independent Person</li></ul>
4 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li></ul>
7 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Review of work programme 2023/24 and future work programme – Deferred until 7 June 2024</li></ul>

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## Appendix 3: Draft Work Programme 2023/24

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7 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Civility in Public Life</li><li>• Protocol on Members Use of Council Resources</li><li>• Publication of Member Addresses.</li><li>• Review of work programme 2023/2024 and future work programme.</li><li>• Annual Report.</li></ul>
6 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Zero Tolerance to Abuse Policy.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li></ul>
4 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Review of the 'Procedure for Member Code of Conduct Complaints'.</li></ul>
6 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of national standards picture.</li><li>• Complaints update.</li><li>• Debate Not Hate Campaign.</li><li>• Review of work programme 2024/25 and future work programme</li></ul>