

WIRRAL COUNCIL

STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

28 APRIL 2014

SUBJECT:	<i>WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15</i>
WARDS AFFECTED	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>HEAD OF LEGAL AND MEMBER SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a proposal for work to be undertaken by the Committee in the 2014/15 Municipal Year.
- 1.2 The proposals are based primarily on matters arising out of the work undertaken by the Standards Working Group in 2013/14 in relation to the Council's Ethical Framework relating to Member conduct and consideration of the Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's Governance Arrangements.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Committee will recall that the Working Group considered the following matters and made recommendations to the Committee at its meeting on 28 April 2014:
 - Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's Governance Arrangements;
 - Members' Code of Conduct;
 - Protocol on Dealing with Complaints Against Members;
 - Disclosure and Barring Service checks for Members;
 - Amendment to the Council's Constitution to give effect to The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
- 2.2 The Committee recommended a revised Members' Code of Conduct and Protocol (effective from 1 August 2014), a revision to the Council's DBS Policy and further amendments to the Council's Constitution, all of which were approved by Council on 9 June 2014.
- 2.3 The Working Group however raised further issues which is considered appropriate for consideration by the Committee when developing its work programme for this Municipal Year, namely:

- (a) Establishing a Protocol of Etiquette (primarily focused on conduct and behaviour expected at meeting of Full Council) to be developed in conjunction with the Council's Occupational Development team/initiatives;
- (b) Review and revision of the Members' ICT Policy;
- (c) Review and revise the information governance arrangements relating to Members in conjunction with the Council's Information Governance Board;
- (d) Consider how high standards of conduct can be further embedded; and
- (e) Monitoring (and review) of the Constitution to ensure any improvements/amendments required can be addressed promptly.

2.4 It is proposed that the Committee again establishes a Standards and Constitutional Oversight Working Group to progress the work outlined in paragraph 2.3 above. Proposed terms of reference for the Working Group are set out at Appendix 1. The Working Group would be a cross-party group that would make recommendations to the Committee for consideration and approval.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to maintain high standards of conduct amongst Members. The Council is required to comply with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 with regards the arrangements for dealing with standards matters.
- 3.2 To ensure the Council's Standards Regime is effective, a regular review and assessment of its effectiveness will help ensure the Council remains compliant with its legal obligations and instils confidence in democratic arrangements.
- 3.2 The Council must comply with all other relevant and applicable legislative requirements.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The review of key matters affecting members provides an opportunity for Members to consider and/or revise the existing arrangements or propose alternative arrangements to ensure they are fit for purposes and do not expose Members to unnecessary risk.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Standards Working Group has a consultative role by virtue of its cross-party membership.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no such implications arising.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 Any proposed changes will need to consider these implications.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The legal implications have been set out in the report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) No EIA is required.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no such implications arising.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no such implications arising.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the Committee:

(a) agrees to the work programme as outlined in paragraph 2.3;

(b) agrees to the establishing of a Standards & Constitutional Oversight Working Group as outlined in this report; and

(c) approves the Terms of Reference of the Working Group as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The recommendations are necessary to ensure compliance with legal obligations and improve governance arrangements.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Surjit Tour**
Head of Legal & Member Services
and Monitoring Officer
Telephone: 0151 691 8569
Email: surjittour@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference of the Standards & Constitutional Oversight Working Group