

Promoting Values for the Council and Demonstrating the Values of Good Governance

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes / No or “not applicable” If yes give reason why N/A
Is it in the Council’s Forward Plan?	Yes/ No or “not applicable” If yes give date it first went in N/A
Is it eligible for “call in” by Scrutiny?	Yes/ No or “not applicable” If no give reason why not N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Corporate

Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or Private: Public

1. Purpose of Report

To present to standards committee a paper on ways in which the committee could support the third principle set out in the Council’s Code of Corporate Governance which states:

“Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.”

and to seek committee’s views on what further action the committee could take to promote values and good governance. The committee’s views will then be reported to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee as part of that committee’s work on Corporate Governance.

2. Key Points

The paper referred to above forms the Annex to this report and identifies the following areas in which there is a role for standards committee:

- Member training for both Kirklees Council members and members of local parish and town councils.

- Publicity for the standards complaints process. There is a separate report on this agenda on development of the standards materials on the Council website but the paper identifies further ways in which publicity could be gained for the complaints process.
- General promotion of the role of standards committee. This includes relationships with other committees, Full Council and senior officers.
- Promotion of ethical standards in partnerships. The paper proposes a role for standards committee in promoting ethical standards in partnership arrangements.
- Defining standards of behaviour expected of members and staff.

3. Implications for the Council

Good Governance and high ethical standards are fundamental to everything the Council does. Any constructive role that the standards committee can play in promoting these issues is important both to the Council's decision making processes and its reputation.

4. Consultees and their opinions

N/a

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

Standards Committee's views are sought on the contents of the paper at the Annex.

6. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

N/a

7. Next steps

To report standards committee's views to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

8. Contact officer and relevant papers

Vanessa Redfern
 Acting Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) and Monitoring Officer
 Telephone: 01484 221720
 Internal: 860 1720
 E-mail: vanessa.redfern@kirklees.gov.uk

Background Papers:
 Council's Code of Corporate Governance

KIRKLEES COUNCIL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF THE 3RD PRINCIPLE:

“Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.”

The Code provides that Kirklees Council will promote this principle by:-

- Exercise leadership by conducting itself as a role model for others to follow.
- Define standards of personal behaviour to be expected of members and staff and those involved in service delivery.
- Require equal standards from partners, contractors and agents
- Put in place arrangements that ensure:
 - effectiveness, through monitoring compliance
 - integrity, by ensuring objectivity and impartiality are maintained in all relationships
 - accountability, through establishing clear and open processes and systems for investigating breaches and disciplinary problems, and taking action where appropriate (including arrangements for redress)
 - openness and inclusiveness, through the documentation of standards, and their regular review
 - Avoidance or mitigation of prejudice, bias or conflict of interest

Steps that we currently take and suggestions for further promotion of high standards of conduct and behaviour:

1. Member training

- Regular training for Kirklees councillors and parish councillors on the Member Code of Conduct – provided by the Monitoring Officer and Legal Services
- Regular training for members of the planning committees and sub-committees on the Planning Protocol, planning law and procedure and recent developments –

provided by legal and planning officers and external trainers

- Skills training for Chairs of planning committees – provided by the Council and externally
- Regular training for members of the Standards Committee on the local standards framework including the conduct of assessment, review and determination hearings – provided by the Monitoring Officer and Legal Services and jointly with the other West Yorkshire Authorities
- Ad hoc training (as the need arises) in response to specific issues of concern regarding eg inappropriate member behaviour at planning committee meetings
- Attendance at the Standards for England Annual Assembly
- Advice from officers on declarations of interest eg BSF, Budget Council
- Providing members with Standards for England publications eg guidance, DVD

Suggestions for further promotion:

- Invite representatives of Standards for England to speak at Council meetings or contribute to local seminars
- Online training
- Undertake a skills audit designed to test knowledge and understanding of constitutional and ethical issues
- Involve the Standards Committee in agreeing the programme of member training and development each year
- Training of parish and town councillors on the Code of Conduct and planning probity issues by the Monitoring Officer
- Involve members of the Standards Committee in the various member training sessions eg joint workshops

2. Publicity for the Standards complaints process

- Publicise the Standards complaints system on the Council web site
- Recently issued complaints leaflet has been distributed in Council offices, libraries, KIPs etc
- Hold hearings in public (where appropriate)

Suggestions for further promotion

- Include in council newsletters to Kirklees residents

- Provide information about how to make Standards complaints to the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary and community sector organizations
- Conduct a survey of public perceptions of Standards issues to gain awareness of current levels of understanding
- Have a dedicated website for Standards issues or raise the profile of the Standards complaints area on the Kirklees website (include news items, training materials etc)
- Include details of the complaints process on employee payslips
- Engaging in local press interviews
- Distribute leaflets in post offices
- Involve the Council's Communication Team in the work of the Standards Committee
- Consider webcasting hearings
- Provide media training and advice on how to handle media enquiries
- Produce a media protocol that sets out the publicity issued at the various stages of the complaints process (work commenced on this)
- Where hearings involve parish or town councilors, send details of the outcome to the clerk for them to arrange for the details to be published in the parish/town council newsletter
- Production of an annual report on the Standards Committee's work
- Stage an "ethical awareness week"

3. General promotion of the role of the Standards Committee

- Chair of Standards Committee has attended a Full Council meeting and a planning committee meeting as observer and to feedback learning points
- Chair of Standards Committee is a co-opted member of the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee
- Meetings between the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Chief Executive have been arranged

Suggestions for further promotion

- Ensure there is an ethical standards presence at all council meetings/committees (or at least a more frequent presence)
- Place a standing item about standards on the agenda of council meetings to ensure that standards issues are regularly discussed and remain at the forefront of council business

- Chair of Standards Committee or the Monitoring Officer could bring regular updates on Code of Conduct/Standards issues to the full Council meeting
- Joint meetings of the Standards Committee with other committees, eg Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Planning & Highways Committee, Corporate Governance & Audit Committee. Also the Standards Committee could have regular meetings with representatives of the parish/town councils
- The Council's Chief Executive to attend a Standards Committee once a year to discuss ethical issues
- Contribute to staff and member inductions

4. Promotion by the Standards Committee of ethical standards in partnerships

Suggestions for further promotion

- Assist in drawing up partnership arrangements by offering advice, guidance or training related to relevant ethical matters
- Involve Standards committee in risk assessment, reviews or audits of partnership arrangements, paying close attention to ethical standards issues
- Organise a seminar on ethical governance, to include partners.

5. Defining standards of behaviour expected of members and staff

- Council has a Member Code of Conduct, a Planning Protocol, an Officer Protocol and a Member/Officer Protocol
- The Planning Protocol and Public Speaking Protocol are currently in the process of being revised and eventually reported to Full Council for formal approval
- A Licensing Protocol has also been drawn up and is in the process of being considered by the necessary committees and eventually reported to Full Council for formal adoption.

Suggestions for further promotion?