

For General Release

REPORT TO:	ETHICS COMMITTEE 25TH FEBRUARY 2014
AGENDA ITEM NO:	8
SUBJECT:	ANNUAL UPDATE ON WORK OF THE COMMITTEE
LEAD OFFICER:	COUNCIL SOLICITOR, DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES & MONITORING OFFICER
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The Council has determined that the Ethics Committee shall be responsible for receiving reports from the Monitoring Officer on matters of probity and ethics for consideration.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT Implementation of the recommendations contained in this report shall be contained within existing budgets	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: N/A	

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Consider and endorse the contents of the report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the work of the Committee over the past year.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Committee is responsible for supporting ethics and high standards of Conduct by Members, monitoring compliance with and relevance of the Code of Conduct and for receiving reports on matters of probity and ethics.
- 3.2 Over the course of the year, in support of this role, the Committee has considered a number of protocols which the Council has in place, including:
 - a protocol with the Police in relation to ethics complaints,
 - protocols for licensing hearings and hearings under the Gambling Act and

- the protocols for planning and strategic planning and the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice to ensure adherence to and compatibility with the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 3.3 The Committee has considered and approved guidance for Members on probity and ethics matters, including in relation to guidance for Members appointed to outside bodies.
 - 3.4 A review of the Code of Conduct has been undertaken by the Committee which included recommendations to full Council for updates to the Code. Furthermore the Committee undertook a review of the register of interests form, suggesting updates and clarifications to full Council. These were adopted by the full Council on 27 January 2014 for implementation from the local elections in May 2014.
 - 3.5 Having considered and had regard to non-statutory guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Committee have updated Members on the non-statutory guides and implications. This consideration also encompassed suggested revisions to the Code of Conduct for Members.
 - 3.6 With the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the requirements for Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to register their interests and comply with the Council's Code of Conduct, the Committee received a report on the progress made to ensure compliance with these requirements by the Health and Wellbeing Board Members.
 - 3.7 In support of the functions of considering applications for the grant of dispensations by Members, the Committee has received reports on specific dispensation requests from individual Members and considered these requests against the statutory criteria. The Committee also considered the appropriateness of granting general dispensations to all Members pertaining to Council Tax setting for a period up to the end of the current Members' term of office in 2014 and granted a general dispensation for this purpose.
 - 3.8 The Committee undertook a review of the Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure and approved the revised policy and procedure for Council use. In addition, the Committee has considered, in an earlier report, an update on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial or other implications arising from this report.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Julie Belvir, Council Solicitor, Director of Democratic and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer (ext 64985)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None