

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 October 2015
Subject:	Work Programme 2015/16
Report of:	Lin O'Brien, Democratic Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Sara Freckleton, Borough Solicitor
Lead Member:	Councillor R J E Vines
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

This report sets out a suggested Work Programme for the Committee.

Recommendation:

To adopt a Work Programme for the Standards Committee for 2015/16 and put in place a methodology and timetable to achieve the Work Programme as set out in Paragraph 2.0 of this report.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To assist the Committee in meeting its aim of ensuring high standards of ethics and probity.

Resource Implications:

Officer and Member resources will be required to undertake the Work Programme.

Legal Implications:

None specifically in relation to this report.

Risk Management Implications:

High standards of ethics and probity reduce the risk of complaints.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Committee will regularly review progress towards achievement of the Work Programme.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The following Protocols have been adopted by the Council for inclusion within the Council's Constitution:

- The Licensing System, Protocol and Procedures;
- Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Councillors;
- Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process; and
- Protocol for Member/Officer Relations.

1.2 In 2013 the Standards Committee adopted a risk based review programme of the above Protocols.

1.3 Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, the Committee considered and recommended to Council a revised Code of Conduct including the Register of Interests which was adopted on 26 June 2012. One of the key changes of the Act was the withdrawal of a mandatory model Code allowing discretion within the provisions of the legislation for each Authority to adopt its own Code aimed at ensuring the promotion and maintenance of high standards of Councillor conduct.

1.4 The Committee also prepared a model Code for the Council's 41 Parish and Town Councils to consider adopting in order to assist these bodies in discharging their statutory responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011. Accordingly, all but five of the Parish/Town Councils adopted the recommended Code with the remaining choosing to adopt the model prepared by the National Association of Town and Parish Councils.

2.0 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

2.1 The first Protocol to be reviewed was for the Licensing System. A Working Group comprising Members of the Standards Committee and Members of the Licensing Committee undertook the detailed work and a joint meeting of the Standards and Licensing Committees recommended a revised Licensing System, Protocol and Procedures Guide to Council for adoption in January 2014. This was subsequently adopted without amendment by the Council at its meeting on 28 January 2014.

2.2 The next Protocol for review was that for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process which commenced in March 2014. Again, a Working Group was established to undertake the review but on this occasion consisting of Members of the Standards Committee and Members of the Planning Committee. The Working Group met on three occasions and, in December 2014, presented a revised Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process to the Standards Committee for discussion and approval prior to consultation with the Planning Committee and wider Council Membership. Subsequently, the amended Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 14 April 2015.

2.3 The remaining two Protocols of Gifts and Hospitality for Councillors and Member/Officer Relations have yet to be reviewed as the then Standards Committee considered that the Planning and Licensing Protocols were the priority. Both Protocols were last reviewed in 2008 but the Gifts and Hospitality Protocol was briefly reviewed to ensure compatibility with the new Code in 2012. It is therefore suggested that the Committee commence a review of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol. In the first instance it is suggested that the whole Committee meet as a Working Group and talk to Members and senior Officers to ascertain their views on the effectiveness of the Protocol and what, if any, changes would improve it.

2.4 Following the review of the Member/Officer Protocol, to be completed by the beginning of 2016, it is suggested that the Committee then consider a review of the Code of Conduct to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the duty under the Localism Act to promote and maintain high standards of Councillor Conduct. The new Code will have been in place in excess of three years and it would be useful to gain the views of longstanding

and recently elected Members on the effectiveness of it.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The Work Programme will involve engagement with Members and Officers of the Council.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Protocol for Member/Officer Relations.
Code of Conduct.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 The Localism Act 2011.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 Not Applicable.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Not Applicable.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Not Applicable.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Contained within the report.

Background Papers: The Licensing System, Protocol and Procedures.
Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Councillors.
Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process.
Protocol for Member/Officer Relations.
Code of Conduct.

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Appendices: None.