

Report of the Head of Democratic Services
STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 9 JANUARY 2015
Standards Committee Workplan 2015-2016

Purpose:	To formulate a workplan for the Standards Committee for 2015-2016 based on the feedback discussions held in 2014.
Policy Framework:	None.
Reason for Decision:	In order to plan ahead the work of the Standards Committee.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that: 1) The Committee consider the report and prioritise the items into a workplan for 2015-2016.
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Finance Officer:	Carl Billingsley
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith

1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the period 18 March and 10 October 2014, the Standards Committee held individual discussions with the Chief Executive, Political Group Leaders, Chairs of Regulatory Committees and the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.
- 1.2 Extracts from these discussions were presented to the Standards Committee on 21 November 2014. Additionally, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales attended the Committee on the 21 November 2014; thereby giving his view on his role and workload.

2. Recurring Themes and Key Issues Raised at Discussions

- 2.1 Councillor Links with Standards Committee. Standards Committee needs to raise its profile with Councillors and greater engagement with all Councillors. Standards Committee needed to become more proactive. Standards Committee meet with other Authorities to assist and improve their role. Rebranding as Standards Board.

- 2.2 Swansea Pledge. 50 of the 72 Councillors had signed the Pledge. This has basically split along Political lines. Standards Committee needs to review the issue. Some Councillors had created and signed their own version of a Pledge. A feeling that it was a Labour Manifesto commitment and not suitable for Opposition Councillors.
- 2.3 Councillors Local Dispute Resolution. Whilst this is an excellent innovation the system has not been used. Standards Committee could raise profile of this and encourage its use. It was suggested that the local dispute resolution be adopted by Community / Town Councils and that Standards Committee may wish to investigate how the various Community Councils operate and if correct procedures are adhered to.
- 2.4 Treating People with Respect.
- 2.5 Merger of the Standards Committee and the Community / Town Councils Standards Sub Committee. The majority support a merger.
- 2.6 Declarations of Interests at meetings were seen to be a precaution against being reported to the Ombudsman. Suggestion that many of the general interests should be added to the non Committee version which must be amended within 28 days of a change.
- 2.7 Standards Committee look at good Governance and best practice in other Local Authorities. It could also look at promoting the Council's values.
- 2.8 Inconsistency in some Ombudsman decisions and guidance difficult to interpret.
- 2.9 Councillor Training and attendance at training. Refresher Training in areas such as the Code of Conduct.
- 2.10 The possibility of promoting best practice e.g. declaration of interest being developed across other public services.
- 2.11 Advantageous if Standards Committee attended Committees in order to consider if good practice is being undertaken.
- 2.12 Annual link with Scrutiny Committee to ensure that Scrutiny was fulfilling its role.

3. Standards Committee Workplan 2015-2016

- 3.1 The Standards Committee are asked to consider the items above and to prioritise them so that they can be used to formulate a workplan for 2015-2106.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.