

**ETHICAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK MONITORING**

Report of the County Solicitor

**Recommendation:** that the report be noted.

1. The Standards Committee agreed previously that the independent, co-opted, members of the Committee should attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and Committees on an ad-hoc basis to observe and monitor compliance with the Council’s ethical governance framework, in line with the agreed protocol.
2. Members have, since the report to the previous meeting, attended the following meetings and their views/feedback are summarised below.

Meeting		Co-opted Member/Observer
Procedures Committee	3 July 2015	Mrs Saltmarsh
Cabinet	8 July 2015	Mrs Mayes
Farms Estate Committee	16 July 2015	Mrs Mayes
County Council	23 July 2015	Mr Sullivan
Exeter HATOC	28 July 2015	Mrs Mayes
Health& Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	14 September 2015	Mr Hodgins
Safer Devon Partnership	16 September 2015	Mrs Saltmarsh
Corporate Services Scrutiny	17 September 2015	Mr Sullivan

3. The following table summarises feedback received from Members on a number of general issues common to all meetings

Observations:	1 = Very Poor and 5 = Very Good				
	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuality and Attendance of Members				✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓
Appearance and presentation			✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Speeches: clear, relevant, understandable, audio levels, use of microphones etc.,			✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓	✓
Use of appropriate language				✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Members’ Conduct & Behaviour				✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓
Clear identification and declaration of interests ( <i>where so declared</i> )					✓✓✓✓

Effective Chairmanship/conduct of meeting				✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Adherence to Agenda			✓	✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Listening and responding to advice (from Officers)				✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓

4. While there were a number of other issues raised by co-opted members in their observations, as set out below, there were no reports of any specific actions or behaviors that might be felt to have resulted in a potential breach of the Code or warranted further action
5. Specific observations by the independent co- opted members were that:
  - firm Chairmanship provided when needed;
  - where the order of business was changed it was done with good and clearly stated reasons;
  - where a timed 'item' overran it was to allow effective debate and discussion and remaining business was dealt with expeditiously to avoid inconveniencing those attending; had timings been exceeded as a result of repetition for example that would not have been good practice;
  - beware the use of acronyms in Reports/debate/discussion (a glossary in such cases is useful for those attending: who may not be experts or aux fait with the language used)
  - while there were technical problems with microphones on a number of occasions some members still fail to use them properly;
  - in some cases members arrive late at meeting without any valid explanation or apology and on occasion members present did not use nameplates provided and/or failed to introduce themselves when speaking; not considered helpful to those attending or watching on the webcast;
  - similarly some members could be reminded of the benefits of brevity and/or precision when posing questions or commenting - and of the need to avoid repetition;
  - members and officers appeared responsive to suggestions made during debates;
  - on one occasion, the choice of clothing and footwear did not seem commensurate with the dignity and formality of the occasion;
  - as previously indicated, and albeit only in a limited number of cases, use of christian names by Members when addressing or referring to other Members or Officers is not considered to be good practice;
6. The latter points were reiterated at the Members Learning & Development Session in late July. Further guidance has also been given to Members – and is also now printed on the reverse of their nameplates – as to the use of microphones, where necessary. . Democratic Services staff will also be reminded of the need for Members to use nameplates at all times..
7. This Report has no specific equality, sustainability, legal or public health implications that have not already been assessed and appropriate safeguards and/or actions taken or included within the detailed policies or practices or requirements relating to the conduct of meetings, to safeguard the Council's position.

JAN SHADBOLT

[Electoral Divisions: All]

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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<b><u>Background Paper</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>File Reference</u></b>
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Nil