

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
County Council	28 July 2016	Mr Hodgins
Audit Committee	7 September 2016	Mr Sullivan
Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny	19 September 2106	Mr Sullivan
County Council	6 October 2016	Mr Sullivan
Devon Strategic Waste Joint Committee	18 October 2016	Mr Sullivan

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

Observations:	<i>1 = Very Poor and 5 = Very Good</i>				
	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:
- continuing instances of members having 'separate conversations' or making 'asides' during debates are not only discourteous to speakers but reflect poorly on the conduct of the meeting, particularly when meetings are webcast;
 - external noise (from corridor/outside room) was disruptive;
 - meetings conducted in a very professional, focused manner;
 - Members demonstrated a willingness to seek clarification where needed, with relevant questions - rather than make assumptions - to assist their deliberations/considerations;
 - Officers' written reports were clear and concise;
 - the Chairman's 'summing-up' was helpful – for members and public alike - in ensuring a clarity about the issues discussed and the issue to be voted upon;
 - is length of Agenda appropriate in all cases and 'timed' agenda are only effective if times are realistic and/or adhered too;
 - Members did not always use microphones - although their contributions may have been audible to those present and, on occasion, contributions by Members appeared unnecessarily lengthy or repetitive.
6. 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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<u>Background Paper</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>File Reference</u>
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Nil