

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

13TH AUGUST 2009

Work Programme for Ethics and Standards Committee

OPEN	
Responsible Officer	Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer	C S Newlands Ext. 2715
Appendices	None

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer to consider the use of a work programme to identify topics for future meetings of the Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to **DECIDE**:

That a work programme be used to identify topics for future meetings of the Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. At the meeting of the Ethics and Standards Committee on 31st March 2009 Members received a report from the Monitoring Officer that informed them that the Standards Board for England would require Monitoring Officers to submit an Annual Return in addition to Quarterly Returns.
- 3.2. The Annual Return was a new requirement and the purpose of it was to inform the Standards Board of the work of each Ethics and Standards Committee in England and to ensure that each Committee was undertaking its functions effectively.
- 3.3. A question in the Annual Return was whether the Ethics and Standards Committee used a Work Programme.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1. Although some neighbouring Councils have adopted the use of work programmes it is not a mandatory requirement for the Ethics and Standards Committee to use one. However, many authorities consider that a work programme:
 - reflects best practice
 - can be used to measure outcomes

- increases transparency
- ensures the Council is an ethical organisation, which promotes and maintains high standards of conduct of elected Members
- is an organisation which relates to the community and improves the service it provides
- raises the profile of Standards Committees, in particular, the changes brought about by the introduction of the local assessment of complaints of alleged breaches by district and parish councillors of the Code of Conduct, under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The financial implications of adopting and using a work programme can be met from existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Standards Board for England promotes Ethics and Standards Committees having work programmes and although it is not a mandatory requirement it is considered to be best practice to use one.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The adoption of a Work Programme will be beneficial as Members will be involved in deciding what to include in the Committee's work programme.

8. CONSULTEES

- 8.1. Chairman/Vice-Chairman Ethics and Standards Committee

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report to Ethics and Standards Committee 31st March 2009 : Quarterly and Annual Returns to the Standards Board for England
- Bulletin 42, Standards Board for England
- Wyre Forest District Council's Annual Return to the Standards Board for England (07/05/09)