

By: Head of Democratic Services
To: Standards Committee – 6 March 2007
Subject: **PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK**
Classification Unrestricted
Summary: Suggests items for inclusion in a proposed work programme for the Committee for 2007/08

FOR DECISION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Standards Committee currently meets infrequently and is generally reactive rather than proactive. There has been nothing wrong with this approach so far but it is clear that CIPFA and CPA guidance envisages standards committees becoming much more involved in actively promoting high ethical standards and constituting the main means of raising awareness within their Council of standards issues.
- 1.2 There is no doubt that the changes proposed in the Local Government and Public Involvement with Health Bill will inevitably give Standards Committees generally a much higher profile but the Committee may wish at this stage to consider adopting a work programme which would:-
- (a) prepare it for its new role when the provisions in the Bill take effect (expected late 2007/early 2008);
 - (b) enable it to raise awareness of standards issues within the Council.
- 1.3 Suggestions for the work programme for the next year include the following:-
- regular diarised meetings – say four a year, including regular opportunities for three group leaders to attend and discuss standards issues;
 - introduction of right for Chairman of Standards Committee to present the Committee's Annual Report to full Council and, when necessary, to address Council on other standards issues;

- co-option of the Chairman of the Committee on to the Governance and Audit Committee because of the links between standards and governance issues;
- more detailed consideration of Members' Annual Reports. This could perhaps become the sole preserve of the Standards Committee, rather than being shared with the Member Remuneration Panel, particularly in view of the separation of the membership of the Committee and Panel from 1 July;
- consideration of all Standards Board for England (SBE) findings on allegations of misconduct against KCC Members to identify and publicise within KCC the lessons that can be learned from those findings;
- consideration of other significant issues relating to Members' conduct (reports from Committee on Standards in Public Life and SBE, Ministerial announcements, SBE Assembly discussions; SBE findings elsewhere, relevant Court judgements, etc);
- monitoring of SBE statistics on allegations/findings to compare KCC with national position;
- regular reviews of Register of Members' Interests, Register of Members' Gifts and Hospitality, Declaration of Interests at meetings, and the way in which the registers are made available for public inspection;
- overseeing the ethical governance audit using the Audit Commission toolkit;
- regular updating of guidance to KCC Members on aspects of the Code of Conduct;
- publication of regular bulletins for KCC Members on standards issues;
- training sessions for Committee Members on investigation and determination of complaints against Members;
- organisation of regular training sessions for KCC Members on various aspects of the Code of Conduct;
- raising wider public awareness of the Members' Code of Conduct through, for example, a separate web page, presentations by Committee Members at appropriate public events, etc.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Members are:-

- (a) invited to add to this list of suggestions;
- (b) decide which suggestions the Committee should adopt for inclusion in its 2007/08 work programme.

Background documents: None

S C Ballard
Head of Democratic Services
Tel: 01622 694002