

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
25 JANUARY 2024

Report Title	Democracy and Standards Committee - Work Programme 2024 2025
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Work Programme 2024 2025

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides the draft Work Programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee 2024/25 for the Committee’s consideration, comment and approval.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 It is not a requirement for the Committee to have an annual work programme. However, it is considered good practice for there to be a work programme as this helps to demonstrate the work carried out the Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference as detailed at Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution.

2.2 At its inaugural meeting on 29 July 2021, the Committee approved a work programme in relation to the roles and functions of the Committee for the year 2021/22. It is customary to agree the work programme at the first meeting of the year. Attached at **Appendix A** is the draft work programme for 2024/25 for the Committee’s consideration and approval.

2.3 The work programme is a fluid document and will be presented to each meeting of the Committee for consideration and review.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Democracy and Standards Committee:

3.1.1 Considers and approves the draft work programme for 2024/25 as detailed at **Appendix A**

3.2 ***Reasons for Recommendation***

3.2.1 The recommendation is intended to:

- a) Enable the Committee to consider and approve its annual work programme 2024/25.

4. Report Background

Terms of Reference of the Democracy and Standards Committee

4.1 The Terms of Reference of the Democracy and Standards Committee are set out in Part 4 of the Constitution:

4.6.2 In relation to the Democratic functions of the Committee

- (a) Reviewing the Council's Constitution and decision-making governance, i.e. the guidance and documents that support decision making, e.g. the Forward Plan guidance and the rules on officer records, and recommending any proposed changes to the Council;
- (b) Conducting polling station reviews and other election functions which it is necessary for the Council to decide (but not the functions delegated directly by statute to the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer);
- (c) Preparing submissions on behalf of the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in relation to the governance of the area;
- (d) Preparing submissions on behalf of the Council to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England.

4.6.3 In relation to the Standards functions of the Committee

- (a) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils;
- (b) Keeping the Member Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, the Planning Code of Conduct under review and make recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the Codes;
- (c) Advising, training or arranging training for Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on matters relating to the Member Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Conduct;
- (d) Giving general guidance and advice to Members and Co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on Member's interests and keeping under review the Registers of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality;
- (e) Granting dispensations to Members and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests;
- (f) Keeping the Council's arrangements for dealing with standards complaints under review and making recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the arrangements;
- (g) Assessing and/or referring for investigation allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils, if so requested by the Monitoring Officer;
- (h) Determining allegations of misconduct on the part of Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils;

- (i) To be a consultee in relation to the Council's Officer Code of Conduct;
- (j) Making recommendations to Council with regard to the appointment of Independent Persons;
- (k) Overseeing the Council's Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and making recommendations to Council on any amendment or revisions to the protocol;
- (l) Receiving an annual report from the Monitoring Officer detailing complaints received, complaints dealt with and resolutions achieved;
- (m) Exercising all the Council's functions, as specified in Regulation 2 of the Local Authority (Functions and Responsibility) (England) Regulations 2000 insofar as such functions are not the responsibility of the Cabinet, Council or any other committee of the Council.

Work Programme 2024/25

- 4.2 The Committee is asked to agree the work programme for the year. A copy of the draft work programme for 2024/25 is detailed at **Appendix A**.
- 4.3 The draft work programme 2024/25 has been produced in accordance with the terms of reference of the Committee.
- 4.4 It is recognised that there is flexibility in the work programme to include any other issues which arise throughout the year. This will enable other more specific items to be added to the work programme as they arise.

5 Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider, provide comment and approve the proposed work programme 2024/25.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the initial proposed Work Programme 2024/25.

7.1 Legal

- 7.1.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. However, the Council must comply with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and a programme of work can support the Council and the Committee in its duty to promote high standards of ethical conduct.
- 7.1.2 The Democracy and Standards Committee and the wider Council have a duty to ensure that Councillors are supported in carrying out their roles effectively. This includes providing training. One of key roles of the Committee is to approve the Councillor Development programme.

7.2 Risk

7.2.1 No specific risks identified.

7.3 Consultation

7.3.1 The Committee will be consulted on its draft Work Programme 2024/25 which will be reviewed at each Committee meeting thereafter.

7.4 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.4.1 None.

7.5 Climate Impact

7.5.1 There are no immediate climate implications arising from this report.

7.6 Community Impact

7.6.1 There are no immediate community implications arising from this report.

7.7 Background Papers

Previous Democracy and Standards Committee Work Programmes: 2021/22, 2022/23