

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

**WEST SUFFOLK
JOINT STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

17 JUNE 2013

JST13/001

Report of the Monitoring Officer

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Joint Standards Committee is asked to note its Terms of Reference (attached at Appendix A) and to agree arrangements for its operation such as the time place and frequency of meetings.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the Terms of Reference (attached).**
- 2.2 To agree the terms of Operation of the Committee having considered the proposals and options set out in Clauses 4.1 to 4.7 of the report**

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3. Corporate priorities/Strategic Priorities

3.1 The recommendations meet the Councils' priorities for the efficient operation of the authorities.

4. Key issues

4.1 When the Councils of SEBC and FHDC agreed to the creation of the new joint Standards Committee they accepted the Terms of Reference that are attached as an appendix to this report.

4.2 The Committee is comprised of three members from each authority, not politically balanced, and there is also one substitute from each council.

4.3 The Chairmanship of the Committee is proposed to rotate annually between the two councils, with the Vice Chairman being from the other authority.

4.4 The timing of Committee meetings has to be decided. FHDC meetings have normally commenced at 6.00 pm. The recommendation of the previous SEBC Standards Committee was to meet at 4.00 pm.

4.5 Both the former SEBC Committee and the FHDC Committee recommended that the meetings should be held alternately at West Suffolk House and the District Offices when they were a regular scheduled meeting. Further meetings to deal with the result of any investigations under the Code of Conduct would be held in whichever venue was appropriate for the matter under consideration.

4.6 The Committee should operate under one set of Procedure Rules either from St Edmundsbury or Forest Heath for the avoidance of doubt. It is proposed to use St Edmundsbury Rules at least until such time as a review of the Constitution at each authority results in a unified set of Procedure Rules for Joint Committees such as this.

4.7 The Committee will need to decide

- The timing of Meetings
- The venue for meetings
- The applicable Procedure rules

5. Other options considered

5.1 Options considered are set out above.

6. Community impact

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 There is no Crime and Disorder Impact.

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 There is no Diversity and Equality Impact.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 There is no sustainability Impact.

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 No other significant impacts

7. **Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 The views of the previous separate Standards Committees are incorporated in the report.

8. **Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 The work of the shared committee is anticipated to result in savings over the alternative of two separate committees.

9. **Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	High/Medium/Low		High/Medium/Low
No Terms of Reference	Low	Ensure Terms of Reference are approved	Low

10. **Legal and policy implications**

10.1 The Committee has the power to establish its own working practices.

11. **Ward(s) affected**

11.1 All wards affected.

12. **Background papers**

12.1 None.

13. **Documents attached**

13.1 Appendix A – Terms of Reference of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions in respect of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council: -

- (a) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members;
- (b) Assisting Councillors and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) Advising the Council on the adoption and revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (f) Granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011;
- (g) Considering a report from the Monitoring Officer in respect of an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct; and
- (h) Dealing with a report from the Monitoring Officer in respect of an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct of a Town or Parish Council within the District of Forest Heath and the Borough of St Edmundsbury;

The Standards Committee will not cover the conduct of officers, for which separate provisions apply.