

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

21st October, 2020

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held via Microsoft Teams at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 23rd October, 2020.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

7. Equality and Good Relations
 - (c) Bilingual Street Signage (Pages 1 - 12)
8. Operational Issues
 - (e) Request for use of the Cenotaph for City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service (Pages 13 - 16)
10. Governance
 - (a) Standards Committee – Draft Terms of Reference (Pages 17 - 22)

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Subject:	Bilingual Street Signage
Date:	23rd October 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager Ian Harper, Building Control Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>To consider options for the consultation of occupiers for the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. Having regard to discussions on the issues the options presented are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain the current policy requiring one third of residents petitioning in favour of the erection of a second name plate and two thirds responding positively to the formal consultation with non-respondents treated as, in effect, against. 2. Retain the one third requirement through petition trigger but adopt a 50+1 rule with non-respondents, in effect, not taken into account. This would be subject to a minimum response threshold of one third;

	<p>3. Adopt an entirely new policy position, the trigger for a consultation being an expression of interest by a resident or residents or Councillor with a percentage of residents (suggested at 20% but to be agreed) responding positively being sufficient to erect a second nameplate subject to residual discretion and protections/mitigations as appropriate;</p> <p>4. The Conradh Na Gaeilge option in which the process is triggered by a request from an occupier with a 10% response threshold and a 50+1 rule;</p> <p>5. Adopt some other position which would be subject to further legal advice.</p>
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to adopt a position in respect of the options presented or consensus on some other position to enable a policy to be finalised and presented for approval.
3.0	Main Report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.1 Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 requires the Council, in deciding whether to exercise its discretion in relation to the erection of a second nameplate, to have regard to the views of occupiers in a street. Thus any policy position adopted requires a process to enable occupiers to be consulted and given the opportunity to respond. This is important because it is a statutory requirement and something which is required to be taken into account in making decisions.</p> <p>3.2 The current policy is that one third of residents, by way of petition, may trigger a formal consultation in relation to the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. If two thirds respond positively the threshold is deemed to be met. The policy treats those who do not respond as essentially not in favour. The policy was subject to a judicial review in 2014 which was successfully defended.</p> <p>3.3 By way of notice of motion on 3 February 2020 it was proposed that the council change its current policy position regarding the consultation requirements on erecting a second name plate in that whilst the one third trigger through petition would be retained, a 50+1 rule in respect of the consultation would be adopted with non-respondents not counted. Concerns were articulated regarding this position in the context of the proposed policy position not being legally robust which led me to propose that a minimum response threshold mirroring the initial trigger should be adopted. Under this a majority in favour would represent circa 17% of</p>

	<p>residents with a one third response rate required overall. There has been some legal contention in respect of the advice given. That advice was subsequently supported by counsel's opinion that was previously circulated.</p>
3.4	<p>Discussions have ensued and progressed toward an option which does not enjoy universal support in terms of where the threshold should land. There is however a level of agreement in relation to the principles that should underpin the policy. In terms of those who are supportive of changing the existing policy all favour an approach embracing international law and standards.</p>
3.5	<p>The position promoted by Conradh Na Gaeilge refers to a simple trigger of a request by a Councillor or resident and a 50+1 rule with non-respondents not counted and a minimum response threshold of 10%. In support the organisation refers to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the UN Special Rapporteur's guide to the implementation of language rights of linguistic minorities. The relevant paragraph of the guidance is as follows:</p> <p><i>Street and locality names and topographical indicators intended for the public are important as markers of social identity, culture and history. A good, practical approach adopted in most countries is for the authorities to provide transparent legislation or procedures to allow bilingual or even trilingual signs, usually following the proportionality principle where there is a sufficient concentration or demand for such signs in minority languages. While national legislation varies, the low threshold where it is considered practicable and reasonable to provide such signs tends to vary between 5 per cent and 20 per cent of the local population, with the lowest threshold usually associated with the use of a minority language that also has some kind of official status or for traditional, historical reasons. The criteria for the display of signs in minority languages must be given a clear and unambiguous legislative basis for it to be effectively implemented. Bilingual or multilingual signs used by public authorities demonstrate inclusiveness, and that various population groups share a locality in harmony and mutual respect.</i></p>
3.6	<p>In the first instance, it is important to remember that how the process is triggered is less important than the consultation itself as it is this that informs decision-making and is formally required by domestic law. A previous proposal by Conradh Na Gaeilge retaining the trigger of a one third petition but with a 50+1 rule in respect of responses has been withdrawn and replaced with the current proposal which contains a minimum response threshold in respect of the consultation.</p>

3.7	<p>The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which the UK is a signatory, establishes an obligation on state signatories not to create barriers in respect of the use of a minority language. The UN Special Rapporteur guidance may also be taken into account in formulating a policy position and as an aide to understand where treaty obligations land in practical terms. The state obligation arising in respect of the Charter has been taken into account in the preparation of this report and in respect of all of the options that would change the current policy. It is also my opinion that all meet the international legal standard and guidance referred to.</p>
3.8	<p>The guidance suggests that a threshold in the range of 5%-20% is acceptable. Thus the threshold suggested in any of the proposals that would change the current policy would appear to meet international standards (Members will recall that it was asserted that the minimum response threshold advocated in option 2 was criticised for not complying with international obligations).The reference to thresholds refers to the 'local population'. Thus any adoption of policy that has its roots in this guidance should refer to the percentage of occupiers in the street responding positively to the formal consultation required for the second nameplate to be erected. Essentially what consultation would seek to establish is if there is a sufficient community of interest to warrant the erection of a second nameplate. In that sense the consultation is not a referendum.</p>
3.9	<p>Any policy needs to reflect on the prevailing circumstances in which its adoption is being considered and the legal parameters established by the domestic legislation in which it is rooted. The Special Rapporteur guidance on the use of bilingual signage is caveated by reference to when it is reasonable and practicable to do so. Even the guidance in reflecting a range of acceptable thresholds, which it describes as 'low', implicitly suggests that there may be local or domestic circumstances that need to be taken into account in the formulation of any relevant policy.</p>
3.10	<p>The political landscape and maturity of post conflict states are likely to be factors that should be considered in fixing the point at which any such threshold might be set. The guidance also establishes that the status of the language and the extent of any community of users are important factors. Both Irish and Ulster Scots are registered under the Charter. Whilst the policy may relate to any language it is an inescapable fact that the predominant outworking will be for street signage in Irish.</p>

3.11	<p>OFMDFM policy, whilst dating back to 2005, emphasised the need for authorities to take positive action to ensure that shared and neutral spaces remain shared and used by all sections of the community. These and the other matters referred to in the preceding paragraph are real world considerations that cannot be swept away by portraying them as obstacles to the implementation of, in this case, a bilingual signage strategy. The guidance clearly allows for consideration of local context. Ultimately these are matters for the parties to take a position on. The domestic obligations in respect of equality and the need to promote good relations also need to be considered in terms of any potential wider impact.</p>
3.12	<p>Taking a look at the outworking of the policies is important. As an example a street of 100 occupiers applying the thresholds would have the following results;</p>
3.13	<p>Under option 1, the current policy position would require 67 occupiers to respond positively (with non-respondents treated as against).</p>
3.14	<p>Under option 2, with a minimum response threshold of one third, the number of positive responses required would be 17 (with 33 responses required).</p>
3.15	<p>Under option 3, with a fixed percentage at the upper end of the low threshold (20%) in the UN guidance the number of positive responses required would be 20 (representing a sufficient community of interest).</p>
3.16	<p>Under the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal of a minimum response threshold of 10%, the number of positive responses required would be 6 (with 10 responses required).</p> <p>Taking account of the legal requirement to have regard to the views of residents I remain of the view that the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal is not sufficient in terms of discharging that obligation and is likely to be legally susceptible to challenge. There is a balance to be struck in terms of the requirement to take account of views as required by the legislation even if the 'regard' duty falls at a lower level than some others. There must be some concept of proportionality in arriving at the outcome.</p>
3.17	<p>It is important to remember that residual discretion exists and that any policy should not be viewed as a straitjacket. There may be circumstances when notwithstanding the consultation response it may be appropriate to depart from the policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. That may work both ways in terms of outcome.</p>

Principles/Mitigations

3.18 In the event that the agreement is reached to change the policy in line with either options 2 or 3 or 4 (the latter contrary to advice) it is suggested that the following principles could be considered in the context of a protocol that the parties may wish to sign up to.

1. That the policy will be used for the promotion of language rights and for the benefit of linguistic communities.
2. That the principles of equality, promoting good relations and respect will underpin the application of the policy in addition to the rights promoted by the policy itself.
3. That, as with any statutory consultation which the council is required to undertake, the City Solicitor may intervene if any complaint is made and a basis for that complaint established.
4. That any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.
5. That the policy will cover the corporately designated Gaelteacht Quarter until such time as a policy which may contain specific proposals in respect of a bilingual strategy have been adopted.

3.19 Administrative Considerations – Finance and Resource Implications

1. Whilst I have indicated that I am less concerned with how the formal consultation is triggered, it is important to remember that any change in policy in terms of the options presented will be likely to increase the number of applications received. For that reason members may wish to fix some petition threshold. This may also help filter those applications that are speculative.
2. Given the potential for increased numbers of applications the council will deal with no more than 5 in any given month. If numbers are excessive they will be held in a queue and dealt with in the order in which they have been received. This will also be managed in the context of the existing staffing resource and the established annual budget for street signage.

3.20	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> Any proposed change to the policy will be subject to consultation and equality screening.
4.0	Document Attached
	Dual language process cost estimates

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Dual language process cost estimates

Brief

“the approximate cost of an average street survey including officer time, postage etc, along with an estimate of the number of streets in Belfast”

Background

- Since April 2012 the Building Control Service (BCS) have received 136 applications totalling 5873 surveys issued.
- The number of residents in a street have ranged from 1 to 353 and everything in between.
- Based on the applications from 2012 the average number of surveys issued per street is 43 surveys
- Approximate number of streets in Belfast is 4000, based upon the live streets contained within the BCS address gazetteer. There are 223 streets already approved for dual language

Summary of Process for each dual language application

PHASE 1 – receipt and validation of application

1. Receipt of application and setting up files and acknowledgement letter
2. Visit to electoral office to verify number of occupants in residential properties
3. Research to determine if street has any non-residential properties. This is a mixture of desktop research and visual inspection on site

PHASE 2 – survey

4. Verify translation from QUB and BCC Irish language officer
5. If initial applicant has 1/3 in support of dual language name then surveys are prepared, printed and enveloped
6. Surveys are hand delivered to ensure the correct amount of surveys are issued and that there are no anomalies i.e. property vacant, unoccupied and work in progress. Also carry out initial survey to determine how many existing signs are in the street
7. When surveys are returned the numbers are recorded and monitored according to responses ie. Yes, No , No preference

PHASE 3 – approval and provision of signs

8. Checking of entire file and preparation of Committee report if 2/3 quota is met
9. If approved then seek any approvals from residents to erect the sign on their property
10. Order sign from contractor and carry out audit on site when sign is erected to ensure correct spelling, location and to authorise payment

Cost analysis

A. Estimated officer time based on the hourly overhead rate for Building Control

PO4 – 4 hours 15 minutes
 SO2 – 3 hours
 SC6 – 10.5 hours

Total = 17 hours 45 minutes

Approximate total cost of office time £568 for average survey of 43 residents. This is broken down into the 3 phases in the table below.

B. Approximate cost for Postage and Printing

43 x second class for return surveys	£262.25
Printing and envelopes approximately 25p per survey	£10.75
Total Cost for postage and printing	£273.00

C. Approximate cost of signs for supply and fit of dual language signs

Based on the cost of 31 dual language street signs ordered since the start of 2020 for a total of 14 streets

The average cost per sign is £124 and an average of two signs were ordered per street. Therefore, the total cost of street signs for one street would average £248.00

The summary table below splits the estimated costs into the three phases in the process, and provides an overall estimated cost of processing dual language applications for the estimated 3,777 streets without dual language street signs.

Summary of Dual Language costs

Based on:

- **Approximate number of streets in Belfast of 4000 less 223 already approved for dual language**
- **An average street of 43 surveys per street**

Break down of 3 phase process for dual language applications	Costs
<p>PHASE 1</p> <p><i>Receipt and validation of application</i></p>	<p>Staff costs based on 4 ¾ hours £146 per street</p> <p>This would equate to £551,442 for 3777 streets in Belfast</p>
<p>PHASE 2</p> <p><i>Survey</i></p>	<p>Staff Costs based on 8 hours £245</p> <p><u>Postage and printing</u> £273</p> <p>Total Cost per street £518</p> <p>This would equate to approximately £1,956,486</p>
<p>Phase 3</p> <p><i>Approval and supply and fitting sign based on:</i></p> <p>The cost of 31 dual language street signs ordered since the start of 2020 for a total of 14 streets</p> <p>The average cost per sign is £124 and an average of two signs were ordered per street.</p> <p>Total cost of street signs for one street would average £248.00</p>	<p>Staff Costs based on 5 hours £177</p> <p><u>Cost of signage</u> £248</p> <p>Total Cost per street £425</p> <p>This would equate to £1,605,225 for this stage of the process</p>
<p>Full process</p> <p>Total Cost for processing dual language sign based on:</p> <p>Total staff costs, cost of signage, postage and printing</p> <p>Balance of approximately 3777 streets without dual language street signage</p>	<p>Staff Costs based on 17 ¾ hours £568</p> <p>Postage and printing £273</p> <p><u>Cost of signage</u> £248</p> <p>Total Cost per street £1089</p> <p>This would equate to approximately £4,113,153.00</p>

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Subject:	Request for use of the Cenotaph for City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service
Date:	23rd October, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor & Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider a request for the use of the cenotaph by the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter on 28th August 2021 to mark the centenary of the formation of NI in 2021.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is recommended to approve the application for the use of the Cenotaph for the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter service on 28th August 2021.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	A request has been received from the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to host a service and wreath laying at the Cenotaph to mark the centenary of the formation of NI in 2021.
3.2	A parade will pass through the city centre arriving at City Hall and continue to other locations after the proposed cenotaph service.

3.3	The People and Communities Committee on 4th June 2019 approved the parade from City Hall to Botanic Gardens organised by City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter. The organisers will seek Parade Commission approval for this parade and liaise with the PSNI.
3.4	The People and Communities Committee on 8th October 2019 also approved the use of Lower Botanic Gardens for a family fun event on 28 August 2021 from 12 noon to 7 pm, organised by the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter.
3.5	The proposed cenotaph event will include a drum lead service and wreath laying. It would involve approximately 1,000 participants including members of 30 bands. The service would take place from 10 am to 11 am.
3.6	Organisers would manage the service in consultation with the City Hall Function Management Unit and would adhere to specific social distancing guidance relevant in August 2021.
3.7	The request required use of the cenotaph for service and grounds for access. No access into City Hall or use of council rooms is required.
	<p><u>COVID implications</u></p> <p>3.8 In managing and delivering future functions, liaison with and guidance for organisers will be provided by officers to ensure compliance with any relevant social distancing guidelines at the time of their function. Committee approval for their function to take place in City Hall is recommended on the basis of their compliance to this caveat and what is permissible and feasible.</p>
	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.9 There is no cost to the Council in approving the use of the cenotaph. All costs associated with the cenotaph service such as PA sound system, security, barriers will be covered by City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.10 Access to the Cenotaph been granted on the basis of the policy of use of the cenotaph which has been previously screened for equality and good Relations implications. At present no direct good relations or equality implications have been identified, however, this is being monitored on an ongoing basis.</p>

4.0	Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Standards Committee – Draft Terms of Reference
Date:	23rd October, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Susanne Wylie, Chief Executive John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer Susan McNeill, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development of draft Terms of Reference for a new Standards Committee
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) note the attached report; and (ii) approve, in principle, the attached draft terms of reference for the Standards Committee
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Background</u>

	<p>At its meeting on 18th September, the Committee agreed to introduce additional arrangements to ensure that the Council, its officers and Elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do. Such arrangements included the establishment of a new Standards Committee, the designation of a “Monitoring Officer” responsible for all issues in relation to standards, and the introduction of a number of new governance arrangements aimed at promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and officers.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p><u>Standards Committee Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>It is proposed that the Council establish a Standards Committee whose main functions would be to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council and the probity of all the Council’s proceedings.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Committee could include the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members and officers, a commitment to joint working across political groups and between officer and Members, oversight of any training required on all matters relating to standards and conduct, advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors and oversight of the Members’ Register and Declaration of Interests and associated procedures. The committee will have a role in managing and maintaining the officer/member interface and relations. It will promote a shared understanding of roles and look at how we work collectively in a political environment.</p> <p>A copy of the draft terms of reference is attached. These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p><u>Complaints raised by an Officer about a Member</u></p> <p>Complaints raised by an officer about a Member are already dealt with under the existing Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (issued by the Local Government Staff Commission).</p> <p>Paragraph 5.9 of that Protocol provides that if an issue cannot be resolved informally and is sufficiently serious, that a formal meeting between the dispute parties, the relevant party group leader and a senior HR representative should take place. The Protocol advises that the minutes of any such meeting be presented to the relevant governance committee in the Council which in this case will be the Standards Committee.</p>

Low level disputes between Members

It is proposed that the Standards Committee will be notified of the outcome of any “low level disputes” between Members which have been dealt with under a voluntary proposed Local Resolution Protocol which will facilitate mediation of such disputes. Low level disputes are defined as those relating to alleged breaches in respect of the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:

- Code para 4.7 - You must not make vexatious, malicious or frivolous complaints against other councillors or anyone who works for, or on behalf of, your council.
- Code para 4.13(a) - You must show respect and consideration for others.

In such cases, the Committee will be advised as to the outcome of the mediation process – for example if no action was taken or if the issue was resolved successfully. The Committee will note that participation in the Local Resolution Protocol is entirely voluntary and any individual councillor is free to make a complaint to the Commissioner for Standards at any time.

Members will note that the introduction of a Local Resolution Protocol to deal with “low level disputes” will be subject to discussions with both the Department for Communities and the Office of the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards.

Serious Potential Breaches of the Code of Conduct

It is proposed that, on occasion, it will be possible for the Standards Committee itself to refer a Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards if the Committee feels that the Member might have breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. This may be particularly relevant with regards to issues which are not categorised as low level disputes between Members but which are serious enough to damage the reputation of the Council.

In such a scenario the Monitoring Officer may identify or be notified of a potential breach of the Code of Conduct. After carrying out any necessary initial inquiries the Monitoring Officer will bring a report to the Standards Committee with a recommendation that either no further action is taken or that the Member be referred to the Commissioner for Standards.

There would however be some element of flexibility in matters of urgency or potential criminal matters where a referral may need to be made directly by the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer. The Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer will therefore retain a residual right to refer any Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Committee has endorsed a recommendation to do so.

3.4	<p><u>Corporate ethics / procurement</u></p> <p>It is also suggested that the Standards Committee has an oversight role on consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment in line with the developing corporate procurement strategy which is being brought to Members in the coming months.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There will be minor financial implications associated with introducing a new Standing Committee. If the Standards Committee is to meet quarterly then it will require an associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.</p> <p>The committee will be serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance; and Democratic Services. A budget will be required to cover any associated training and external mediation services.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes.</p>
4.0	Document Attached
	Draft Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference

These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

The draft **Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee** may include some or all of the following functions:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected Members and officers
- a commitment to encourage positive joint working across political groups and between officers and Members and to uphold the high standards of values and behaviours in a relationship of mutual trust
- advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors including any revisions to the Code
- oversight of any training required to train Members and relevant officers on all matters relating to standards and the promotion of the 12 Principles of Conduct in public life, including the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and any associated training identified by the Committee
- oversight of the Members' Register and Declaration of Interests
- to develop, monitor and review any local protocols required to support the standards regime within the Council
- to keep under review the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- to consider any minutes of a formal meeting held under Section 5.9 of the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- oversight of the Local Resolution Protocol which will deal with "low level disputes" alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and is designed to restore positive working relationships through mediation¹
- consideration of any recommendation by the Monitoring Officer to refer any Councillor to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in respect of any potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, particularly where the alleged breach relates to a matter which would potentially have a reputational consequence for the Council
- the Monitoring Officer will retain a residual right to refer any matter to the Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Standards Committee has endorsed a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to do so
- oversight of any mediation process required to restore internal relationships between political parties, Members and/or officers
- consideration of update reports into investigations carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards.
- oversight of the implementation of recommendations made by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards.

¹ The Local Resolution Protocol will only deal with minor complaints about councillors made by other councillors. The Protocol will not consider complaints made by officers, members of the public or other third parties. The Protocol will not consider complaints made about officers

- providing recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in respect of any amendments which need to be made to the Council Constitution in relation to the standards regime within the Council
- consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment