

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Standards Committee
Date:	10 October 2023
Subject:	Meeting with the Leader of the Council and with the Chief Executive
Chief Officer:	Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer
Ward(s):	ALL
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to afford the Standards Committee an opportunity to discuss with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive matters relating to the Council's ethical governance framework and issues of probity, particularly the Authority's approach to ethical governance and its key priorities in ensuring that high ethical standards continue to be promoted and maintained within the Council.

Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

- a) Welcome this opportunity for discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, and
- b) Recommend any actions that the Committee feels would support continued improvement in the Council's approach to ethical governance.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners have noted this report.

2. Report

- 2.1 The purpose of the Standards Committee as set out in Article 9A of the Council's Constitution is "*to promote and maintain the highest ethical standards.*" This is in order to enable the Council to comply with section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 which requires the council to "*promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.*"
- 2.2 The Committee also has a number of core functions including assisting members to observe the Council's Ethical Framework and the Code of Conduct, advising and training members on matters relating to the ethical framework, and monitoring its operation.

- 2.3 Parishes within the Borough also have the same statutory obligation in relation to their own members, and the Committee also assists parishes within the Borough in their duty to comply with it.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Committee meeting with the Leader of the Council and with the Chief Executive is to seek their perspective as to how the Ethical Framework, as set out in the Council's Constitution, is working in practice in relation to both members and officers. Further, it also offers them the opportunity to suggest areas on which the Standards Committee could focus in order to promote and maintain ethical standards whether it be in relation to the culture of the authority or ensuring that necessary elements of the ethical framework are in place.
- 2.5 The Committee can then consider whether any suggestions put forward should be included in a future work programme of the Committee.
- 2.6 As background to this discussion, an Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1. The Ethical Audit has looked at the various elements of the Council's ethical framework and sets out the current situation with a view to the Committee being able to identify any particular areas for review and/or action to be taken in a future work programme.

Options considered

It is open to the Committee not to invite the Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive to meet with them.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

No specific financial implications have been identified as arising from this report.

3.2 Legal implications

The Council has a duty under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. Meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive will help inform the Standards Committee as to any current or emerging issues which may need to be addressed.

3.3 Risk management implications

No risk management implications have been identified as arising from this report. Any risk management issues which may arise during discussion of this report will be addressed in any future report.

3.4 Environmental implications

No environmental implications have been identified as arising from this report.

3.5 Equality implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been completed for this report as it does not recommend a change in Council policy or service.

4. Background Papers

None