

Report to Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 9 November 2010

Subject: Councillor Accountability Statements

Responsible Officer: I Willett (01992 564243)

Democratic Services Officer: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)



Recommendations:

- (1) That the revised Member Accountability Statements based on the model provided by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) be considered with a view to recommending their adoption by the Council;**
- (2) That those Accountability Statements included in the Council's Constitution be reviewed in the same way and submitted for adoption;**
- (3) To consider whether an Accountability Statement in respect of the Chairman of the Standards Committee should be pursued and, if so, to consider that Committee accordingly;**
- (4) To consider whether an Accountability Statement for the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee be submitted to future meetings of that Committee for consideration and adoption by the Council; and**
- (5) That all Accountability Statements be referred to the Remuneration Panel to assist them in advising the Council on Member Remuneration in the future.**

Report:

1. At the Council meeting on 20 April 2010, the following resolution was adopted (Minute 169(18)):

"That Overview and Scrutiny be asked to refer the Member Role Accountability Statements which had been revised in order to reflect the changing role of members, to the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel with a view to recommendations being made for their adoption after consultation with the Remuneration Panel and the Standards Committee as appropriate".

2. This resolution was referred for consideration by this Panel at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12 July 2010 (Minute 23).

3. Copies of the revised Statements which had been drafted on the basis of the advice given by Audit commission are attached as follows:

- ...
- (a) Leader of Council.
 - (b) Deputy Leader.
 - (c) Member of Council.
 - (d) Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committee.

- (e) Chairman of Panels.
 - (f) Portfolio Holders.
 - (g) Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.
 - (h) Chairman of Standards Committee.
 - (i) Group Leaders.
 - (j) Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
4. In the Council's Constitution, a number of other Accountability Statements which are not included in the IDeA's list are published. These date back to 2001 and are as follows:
- (a) Chairman of Council;
 - (b) Vice-Chairman of Council;
 - (c) Vice-Chairman of Committee Panels or Boards; and
 - (d) Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

... Copies of these Statements are also enclosed.

5. The Panel will recall that a further statement in respect of a Deputy Portfolio Holder has already been recommended to the Council and is due for consideration on 2 November 2010.
6. The IDeA model Accountability Statement was drawn to the Council's attention by the Remuneration Panel in its last annual report. They were commended to the Council in that they sought to bring the role of Councillors up-to-date since the original versions were published in 2001 and also because the Panel felt that these new statements offered a good benchmark for future discussions between the Council and the Panel regarding member remuneration.
7. The Panel will note that one of the IDeA Statements relates to the Chairman of the Standards Committee and it is suggested that before this is put forward to the Council, the Standards Committee should be consulted as to the content. Similarly, there is no Statement at present for the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and it is suggested that officers draft an Accountability Statement for submission to the Audit and Governance Committee at a future meeting for their consideration and report onto Council.
8. The Panel is asked to consider the recommendation set out at the commencement of this report.