

**North East Derbyshire District Council**

**Standards Committee**

**26 February 2015**

<b>Standards Survey Action Plan</b>
-------------------------------------

**Report No ADGMO/2/15/MK/SS of the Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

- To advise of the steps proposed to be taken to address issues raised in the recent standards survey.

**1. Report Details**

- 1.1 In late 2013, the Committee commissioned that a survey be undertaken of District Council members and officers and parish and town councillors and clerks into ethical standards. The purpose of the survey was to establish a baseline about what was known about ethical standards, to identify any training requirements and to compare attitudes between members and officers.
- 1.2 The survey ran from 16 February to 31 May 2014 and reports setting out the results from the survey were presented to this Committee at its meetings in July, October and November 2014. Whilst the results uncovered little evidence of hidden misconduct, fraud or corruption, they did identify a lack of training on ethical standards amongst some groups and lack of awareness of key protocols and procedures such as the Member and Officer Protocol and Members' Code of Conduct.
- 1.3 The action plan presented at **Appendix A** sets out the steps officers propose to be taken in response to the survey results. Members will note that a lot of actions proposed have already happened. These include:
  - Publishing details of the survey and key protocols on the Council's Intranet (see press release at **Appendix B**).
  - Writing to parish and town councils to offer support and training at their convenience (see letter at **Appendix C**).
  - Briefing officers on the decision-making process and ethical standards issues. Members will recall they considered the training slides for these

sessions at their meeting in October. A similar session for members is planned for the next Member Involvement Half Day on 10 February.

- 1.4 The outstanding actions are time-bound. Briefings on the Code with parish councils are planned for after the election. Some of the issues around improving the perception of the Standards Committee can only realistically be carried through when there are cases to determine.

## **2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 To advise members of the work planned to be undertaken in respect of the standards survey results.

## **3 Consultation and Equality Impact**

- 3.1 Consultation on the action has been undertaken with colleagues in the Governance Team and with the Chair of the Committee.

## **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 None.

## **5 Implications**

None, other than staff time

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 That the Committee:

(a) Approves the action plan attached to this report at Appendix A.

(b) Notes the work already undertaken in respect of actions identified.

## **7 Decision Information**

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
<b>District Wards Affected</b>	None
<b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b>	None

## 8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Action plan
B	NEDi article
C	Letter to parish clerks
<b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
N/A	
Report Author	Contact Number
M Kane Governance Manager	01246 217753

Standards (0226) AGIN 5(b) – Standards Survey Action Plan/MD/AH

Issue	Proposed actions	Timescale	Lead officer	Progress
<p>Knowledge of what ethical standards is, where to find the Code of Conduct and how to report a breach</p> <p>(Mentioned by officers)</p>	<p>Council to hold briefing sessions covering ethical standards, the Code and how to report a breach</p> <p>Publish details of survey and protocols on the Intranet</p>	<p>October/November 2014</p> <p>October 2014</p>	<p>AD – Governance and Governance Manager</p> <p>Governance Manager</p>	<p>Demystifying the Constitution sessions completed on 28/10 and 3/11/14. Separate session for SAMT planned for 23/1/15.</p> <p>Completed 20/10/14 (see appendix B)</p>
<p>Standards Committee not seen as making a positive difference to ethical standards</p> <p>(Officers, parish councillors and clerks)</p>	<p>Publicise the outcome of complaints where there has been a breach of the Code</p> <p>Send a copy of Committee's annual report to all parish and town councils</p> <p>Publish a copy of the Committee's annual report on the Intranet</p> <p>Results of ethical standards survey presented at District and Parish Liaison Meeting</p>	<p>As and when</p> <p>May 2015</p> <p>May 2015</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>Governance Manager</p> <p>Senior Governance Officer</p> <p>Senior Governance Officer</p> <p>Governance Manager / Chair of Committee</p>	<p>On the agenda for 21 January 2015</p>

Issue	Proposed actions	Timescale	Lead officer	Progress
<p>Lack of training given on ethical standards matters</p> <p>(Officers and clerks)</p>	<p>Council to hold briefing sessions covering ethical standards, the Code and how to report a breach</p> <p>Hold parish council event either before or after the elections, potentially plug into DALC seminar and SLCC event</p> <p>Make offer to clerks to attend parish and town councils to advise on standards and governance issues generally</p>	<p>October/November 2014</p> <p>Summer 2015</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>AD – Governance and Governance Manager</p> <p>Governance Team</p> <p>Senior Governance Officer</p>	<p>Completed on 28/10 and 3/11/14. Separate session for SAMT on 23/1/15.</p> <p>Completed – letter sent 11 December 2014 (see appendix C)</p>
<p>Concerns about level of clarity and accessibility of Council's complaints procedures</p> <p>(Officers and clerks)</p>	<p>Publish details of survey and protocols on the Intranet</p> <p>Hold parish council event either before or after the elections, potentially plug into DALC seminar and SLCC event</p>	<p>October 2014</p> <p>Summer 2015</p>	<p>Governance Manager</p> <p>Governance Team</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Issue	Proposed actions	Timescale	Lead officer	Progress
	Write to all parish clerks enclosing ROI forms and copies of relevant procedures	Late April 2015	Governance Manager	
Knowledge about Member/ Officer Protocol (Officers)	Publish details of survey and protocols on the Intranet	October 2014	Governance Manager	Completed
Knowledge of member decision making process (Officers)	Council to hold briefing sessions covering the decision-making process	October/November 2014	AD – Governance and Governance Manager	Completed on 28/10 and 3/11/14. Separate session for SAMT on 23/1/15.
Concerns about knowledge of confidential arrangements for staff to express concerns about fraud, misconduct and corruption (Officers)	Publish details of survey and protocols on the Intranet	October 2014	Governance Manager	Completed
Lack of knowledge about how seriously complaints are taken by the District Council (Officers)	Publicise the outcome of complaints where there has been a breach of the Code	As and when	Governance Manager	

NEDI/RYKI - Ethical Standards Survey Results - Windows Internet Explorer

http://intranet/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=26210&click=39297

Calendar - March, 2015 | Der...

NEDI/RYKI - Ethical Stand...

http--10.3.1.799091-servle... Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery http-www.publications.p...

Home News Staff Directory You & Your Job Corporate stuff Online Tools Members

**News**

- News Home
- News for NEDDC staff**
- In-House magazine
- the NEWS magazine
- NEDDC press releases
- Weather / Flood Warnings and Updates
- Choice Based Lettings Newsletters
- RH Press Releases / Homing In
- Shout About YOUR News
- Administration

You are here > Home > News > News for NEDDC staff > Ethical Standards Survey Results

## Ethical Standards Survey Results

Like (0) Share Options

Author:  Authored By Matthew Kane  
View All By Matthew Kane

Attachments:

- Ethical Standards Survey (466 KB)
- Anti Fraud Corruption Strategy (80 KB)
- Appendix C Whistleblowing Policy (26 KB)
- Code of Conduct - update Dec 2013 (64 KB)
- Officer Code Member Protocol (54 KB)
- Officer Code of Conduct (42 KB)

Keyword Cloud:

codes ethical protocols  
results standards survey  
Suggest A New Keyword

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Rate This Document Yourself

Analytics:

- Today's hits - 2
- Visits this week - 2
- Hits in the last 30 days - 2
- Quality Score - 5
- Last Updated - Today
- Published on - 20/10/2014

North East Derbyshire District Council encourages high ethical standards amongst its members and officers but there is still work to do to ensure that the key codes and protocols governing ethical conduct are more widely known amongst staff.

That is the message from the recent Ethical Standards Survey that was completed by members and employees earlier this year. A separate survey was run with the District's parish and town councils.

A copy of the full report can be found by clicking on the attachment on the right.

Councillor Jane Austen, chair of the Council's Standards Committee, said: "Thanks to all members and officers for responding to the survey which has been important in establishing a baseline for the Committee to understand what is known when we talk about ethical standards and also how people feel about registering complaints.

"The Committee has considered the conclusions of the survey and will be drawing up an action plan in due course.

"Clearly a priority for us is ensuring that staff are more familiar with the key codes and protocols that govern ethical behaviour so that if they uncover something wrong they know the correct channel through which to report it and can have confidence that it will be dealt with expediently."

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE, Leader of the Council, said: "As public servants and office holders, we need to be whiter than white in the eyes of the local residents we serve. When things go wrong in any organisation, the reputational impact can be extremely damaging.

"I was pleased to see that this report uncovered no major issues within the Council but that doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels. We must continue to ensure that our policies and protocols are robust so that, if they are ever put to the test, issues are dealt with firmly and fairly."

Details of relevant codes and protocols are given on the right-hand side of this page. These will be explored further at the Demystifying the Constitution briefing session on Monday 3 November at 2pm in the Council Chamber.

Please email [Matthew Kane](#), Governance Manager, to register your attendance.

You are logged in as Matthew Kane

This Intranet is Powered by Interact

Start

10:23  
19/01/2015

To: **Parish/Town Clerks**

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FP/AJD

Contact: Frazer Powell

Tel: 01246 217045

Fax: 01246 217442

Date: 11 December 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

**Ethical Standards Survey**  
**Parish/Town Council Results 2014**

The Council's Standards Committee, as part of its Ethical Standards Survey work, considered a report on the findings from a survey of Parish/Town Councillors and clerks. I attach a copy of the report: Ethical Standards Survey – Parish Council Results 2014, which was considered by the above Committee on 27 November 2014.

The Committee noted the report and requested that it form part of a presentation to the District and Parish Liaison Group meeting on **Wednesday, 21 January 2015**. Given the findings of the report the District Council proposes to undertake a further series of training events for Parish/Town Councillors and clerks following the elections in May 2015. The Committee requested that each Parish/Town Council give careful consideration to participation in the governance training/development events. You will be advised of the arrangements for the training/development events in the new municipal year 2015/2016.

If you have any questions or require any assistance on the above please contact either Matthew Kane, Governance Manager on (01246) 217753 or [matthew.kane@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.kane@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk) or Frazer Powell, Senior Governance Officer on (01246) 217045 or [frazer.powell@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:frazer.powell@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk) who will be pleased to assist you.

The above two officers are available to attend Parish/Town Council meetings if invited, to provide information/advice on governance related matters.

Yours sincerely



Frazer Powell  
Governance Team  
North East Derbyshire District Council  
Telephone Number (01246) 217045  
Email: [frazer.powell@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:frazer.powell@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk)

Enc

cc: S Sternberg  
M Kane