

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee Thursday, 26 June 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Linda Walker, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
LGA Best Practice Guidance for Standards Committees	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, (Head of Democratic Services)
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

This report is to update the Committee on the proposed creation of new LGA Best Practice Guidance for Standards Committees.

The Committee are asked to review the report and offer and comment they may have.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the report.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The report is to provide the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the proposal to create new best practice guidance.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable as this is just a discussion report.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Hoey Ainscough Associates (HAA) have been tasked by the Local Government Association (LGA) with looking into the possibility of creating new best practice guidance for Standards Committees.

- 3.2 As we have worked with HAA before they have approached Tower Hamlets, as well as selected other authorities, for any initial comment/thoughts we have in relation to the proposed guidance.
- 3.3 Should any guidance be created, the next stage would be for training material to be developed to work alongside the guidance.
- 3.4 At this stage it is just a scoping exercise and there are no set timescales for the development of the project.
- 3.5 Some early questions HAA have set are whether:
- the council has a 'stand alone' or combined standards committee (or indeed no committee overseeing standards),
 - what its composition is (does it reflect proportionality or has it been waived and does it have any co-opted members, is there an executive member if appropriate who leads on the issue)
 - what are its terms of reference
 - Where you have parish councils what if any relationship is there between the committee and its parishes (other than individual cases) and – Note – not applicable to Tower Hamlets.
 - any examples of good (or indeed bad!) practice you might have. We are particularly interested in the proactive role of promoting and maintaining high standards as opposed to the reactive complaint handling aspects.
- 3.6 The Committee are asked to consider this proposed work and consider whether there is any feedback it wishes to submit to HAA either on the points above or on any other relevant matter.
- 3.7 HAA have no specific deadline to complete their consideration of this project but hope to complete it in the summer of 2024.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None specific to this report but effective operation of the Standards Advisory Committee helps support all Members in their role including in relation to all equalities characteristics.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,

- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 None specific to this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no financial implications of the Council providing comments on the creation of a new LGA Best Practice Guidance for Standards Committees.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The Committee's functions include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members of the Council as well as advising on the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members in light of best practice and changes in the law. It is therefore appropriate for the Committee to comment on this discussion report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- None

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A