

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES****NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGMENTS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To report on the County Council's new governance arrangements, and their immediate impact on the Standards Committee.

Information and Advice

2. The County Council on 29 March agreed to change the governance arrangements from a Leader/Cabinet Executive system to a committee system, using powers under the Localism Act.
3. The committee system form of governance is seen as being the most democratic form of decision making, enabling all Councillors to be involved in decision making. They will also gain experience of the areas covered by the committees on which they serve. Committees rather than individuals will make all decisions, except for day-to-day operational decisions which will continue to be made by officers. These operational decisions will be reported to committees on a regular basis to ensure accountability. For the public, the committee system is more transparent as it is clear who is taking the decisions, with the papers being publicly available in advance of the decision being made.
4. The new arrangements came into effect on 17 May, which was the date of the Council's Annual Meeting. New committees have been created to cover the areas which were previously the responsibility of portfolio holders. A number of regulatory committees will continue, with some changes to their functions. Separate scrutiny committees cease to exist, apart from the scrutiny of health.
5. The Constitution has been revised to take account of the new arrangements. A series of briefing sessions has been held for councillors and officers. There is a commitment to review the arrangements after six months.
6. No final decision has been taken about the future of the Standards Committee after 1 July. A separate report on this agenda explains the current position in relation to standards.

7. However, the Council has agreed new terms of reference for the Standards Committee, which are as follows:

Responsibility for discharging the Council's regulatory powers as follows:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct for Councillors and co-opted members and helping them follow the Code of Conduct
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct
- Advising on Councillor training in matters of conduct
- Dealing with all matters relating to any alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members
- Granting dispensations to Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct
- Considering applications from officers for exemption from political restriction in respect of the post held by that officer

8. Some of the Standards Committee's other responsibilities have been allocated to committees as follows:

- monitoring the operation, and advising the Council on the updating and revision, of all Codes of Conduct and Practice of the County Council - Policy Committee
- monitoring and reviewing the County Council's complaints procedures - Policy Committee
- approving the recruitment process for any independent members of committees and panels required by statute - Policy Committee
- monitoring use of councillors' divisional funds - Finance and Property Committee
- issues arising from the Members' Allowances Scheme - Administration Committee

Policy Committee's terms of reference include responsibility for ensuring high standards of conduct by the County Council, its Councillors, co-opted members and officers.

Other Options Considered

9. This report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. This report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

1) That the report be noted.

Jayne Francis-Ward

Corporate Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

1. As the report is for noting only, Constitutional Comments are not required.

Financial Comments (MB 18/05/12)

2. There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

County Council reports about new governance arrangements, 29 March & 17 May 2012:-

<http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/apps/ce/memman/memman.nsf/councildiary-details.htm?OpenAgent&unid=AB0438F3D90C221980257871004A2697&Go=Go&day=18&mon=03&yr=2012>

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/93/Committee/2/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All