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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 16</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2009</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>ANDREA McCASKIE (EXT. 5831) HEAD OF LEGAL &amp; DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b>	<b>DOC:U:\JAYNE\Commtee\COMM REP\Code Corp Gov rep to Council 1 Oct 09.doc</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – REVIEW OF SELF ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>REF: AGM/JB</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendation**

- 1.1 That the Council considers the recommendations of the Standards Committee, set out at paragraph 3.4, and those of the Audit Sub-Committee, set out at paragraph 3.3 on the Local Code of Corporate Governance – Review of Self Assessment.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To consider the recommendations of the Standards Committee and Audit Sub-Committee on the Local Code of Corporate Governance – Review of Self Assessment.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 A revised Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Council on 3rd July 2008, at which time it was reported that a Self Assessment audit had been carried out by senior officers to provide evidence of how the Council had fulfilled or intended to fulfil its commitment to corporate governance.
- 3.2 In approving the Code, Full Council resolved that the Standards Committee and the Audit Sub-Committee should receive half yearly reports on progress in relation to compliance with the six core principles on which the Code is based. This was to ensure that the Standards Committee had a pivotal role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct, whilst the Audit Sub-Committee would oversee and monitor arrangements for complying with Corporate Governance issues, including approving the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.3 On 17th June 2009, the Audit Sub-Committee reviewed the Action Plan and Self Assessment document. It accepted the Self Assessment carried out by the senior officer group and was satisfied with the progress made in achieving the action points and the plans for improvement, agreeing that progress would be reviewed in six months. In the meantime, the Sub-Committee requested a report to the next meeting on 30th September 2009 in relation to Member training, which was an area that had been identified in the Action Plan.

- 3.4 On 21st July 2009, the Standards Committee reviewed the Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan and Self Assessment document in relation, in particular, to Principle 3 'Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour'. The Committee was satisfied with the actions taken to date and the plans for improvement and looked forward to receiving a progress report in six months time.
- 3.5 At the request of Members, an external assessment was undertaken on how far the Council's current processes and documentation meet the principles set out in the Local Code of Corporate Governance. Janie Barrett of SOLACE Enterprises, who sat on the joint working party that produced both versions of the CIPFA/SOLACE Code of Corporate Governance guidance, undertook the review in March 2009.
- 3.6 The review confirmed that the Council's Local Code complies in full with best practice, as set out in the national framework and guidance for the production of the Code and its contents. By identifying individuals and committees to be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, process and documentation referred to in the Code and having the evidence to show that this is taking place, has greatly assisted the Council in meeting the principles set out in the Code.
- 3.7 The review went on to state that the Council has identified those areas where it wishes to improve and how these should be addressed.
- 3.8 The conclusion of the review was that the next stage is for the Council to consider how it can go beyond policies and processes and embed good corporate governance into all Council activity. This was an area looked at by the senior officer group on 19th May 2009, who believed that this can be achieved by developing examples of good practice and utilising the Comprehensive Area Assessment to these ends. Current examples of good practice include:
- reviewed the Officer Scheme of Delegation
  - adopted a revised local Code of Corporate Governance in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework, which is reviewed six monthly
  - reviewed and updated the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act policy, procedure, guidance and training, in line with best practice
  - reviewed and updated the Protocol for the Use of Information Technology by Members of South Derbyshire District Council, in line with changes introduced by Government Connect
  - adopted Member role profiles and personal development plans
  - approved a Monitoring Officer Protocol
  - developed a robust Action Plan to take us to Level 3 of the Equality Standard that included undertaking Equality Impact Risk Assessments
  - introduced a locally based system for the assessment, referral, investigation and hearing of complaints of alleged Member misconduct

- published an Annual Report
- reviewed the Corporate Communications function
- introduction of a new Performance Management system
- creation and adoption of a new Corporate Plan 2009/14

3.9 In view of the fact that corporate governance is an all-encompassing concept, Council has approved that the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, is to have overall responsibility for implementing the Code and monitoring the Council's performance against the commitments contained within it.

3.10 It must be recognised, however, that the Code should be owned by all Members and Officers.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 None directly arising from the report.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

5.1 The Code overarches all the Council's activities and compliance with it will necessarily take into account all the Council's policies and strategies in relation to these issues.

5.2 The self assessment process is an important element in ensuring that the Council keeps under review its Local Code of Corporate Governance, in order to continue to maintain the six core principles.

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

6.1 A key aim of the authority is community leadership, which is concerned with the style and manner in which the Council operates and how we relate to local people and partners. One important aspect included in this aim is our policies and arrangements for corporate governance.

#### **7.0 Background Papers**

- Local Code of Corporate Governance – hyperlink to Constitution
- CIPFA/SOLACE publication "*Delivery Good Governance in Local Government*".