

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1 October 2007

Update re Statement for stakeholders re ethical framework

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members regarding the proposed use of the agreed statement for stakeholders of the Council's stance on ethical issues.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the recommendation of the Standards Committee, the following statement for stakeholders was approved by Council on 18 July 2007:

North Yorkshire County Council believes in a strong ethical culture. The conduct of its members and officers in fulfilling their roles is regulated by national Codes of Conduct and a comprehensive complaints framework.

Standards of behaviour within the Council are generally excellent: the Council continues, however, to promote the ethical agenda to ensure the existing high standards are maintained; and the Leader and Chief Executive Officer are committed to working together to lead by example and to uphold the ethical wellbeing and effective governance of the Council.

In working with partners and service providers on Council business, the Council requires similarly high standards from those with whom it works.

3.0 USE OF THE STATEMENT

- 3.1 At its last meeting, the Committee agreed that the statement should be published on the Council's website and Intranet and also incorporated, where appropriate, into contractual and procurement documentation. The Committee requested that the Monitoring Officer report back to the Committee on ways to ensure that the requirements regarding the statement were being met.
- 3.2 The Monitoring Officer has consulted the Principal Lawyer (Partnerships & Procurement) on the best ways to incorporate the statement into work practices and to monitor its use. It has been suggested that a statement be included in the Council's Procurement Manual and in some of the procurement precedent documentation.
- 3.3 The Council has a Corporate Procurement Group and the statement and its use will be put on the agenda for discussion. It is not thought necessary to include the statement in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules as it will not be practicable, or appropriate, to include the statement in each and every contract (for example, if the Council is buying some proprietary software it will be unable to negotiate this clause into the terms). It would be most appropriate to include the statement where the Council is seeking relatively high value quotations (£20k+) or tender exercises where the statement could be included in the instructions to tenderers.

- 3.4 Another option is to include a statement in the Council's standard pre-qualification questionnaire to the effect that these are the Council's standards and get respondents to confirm that they endorse them. However, it is difficult to know just what effect, if any, this will have, as it rather presupposes that the Council is in a dominant position when it is procuring goods and services, and whilst that is sometimes the case it is certainly not invariably so.
- 3.5 The promotion of the statement with contractors is also being considered in conjunction with the similar promotion of the Whistle Blowers' Hotline and Policy
- 3.6 A further report will be brought to the Committee in the future, explaining the ways in which the statement has been used.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are requested to note this report.

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Background Documents:
None

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