NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1 October 2007

Standards Committee Work Programme

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the Committee's Work Programme.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At each of its meetings, the Standards Committee reviews its programme of work. The current Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 and the Ethical Audit Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2, for ease of reference.

2.2 The Work Programme and Action Plan incorporate the core items which were required to meet the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry, as set out below:

Action Points

NYCC Position	Action Points	Deadline
Members' Register of Interests	Easily accessible to members of the public	September 2006
Officer Register of Interests	Implement across Authority PO6 and above	September 2006
Leader and Chief Executive Officer	Roles in ethical agenda to be defined.	September 2006
Members' Code of Conduct	Integrated into diversity policies. Linkages between the Code of Conduct and FOI, HRA, SDA.	September 2006
Chief Executive Officer attends Standards Committee, promotes initiatives	Leader to have involvement in the promotion of ethics agenda	September 2006
Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer promote ethical agenda	Produce communications strategy	March 2007

2.3 The September 2006 deadline for the item re the Members' Code of Conduct was imposed by the previous Monitoring Officer. The item has now been re-prioritised for the Committee's meeting on 1 October 2007.

3.0 WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 For the sake of completeness, the Work Programme has been amended since the last meeting to incorporate "reporting back" items, which need to come back to the

Committee at a future date. This should provide an additional safeguard that such matters are monitored.

3.2 It is also suggested that in the future, the Work Programme should be compiled on the basis of a rolling 12 month Schedule. This will enable the Programme to give a clear overview of the Work undertaken by the Committee but, eventually, completed items will disappear from the live Programme and so keep it to a manageable length and content.

3.3 It appears that the agreement at the last meeting for quarterly meetings next year, rather than five meetings per year, may have missed the necessary administration slot, as five meetings have again been scheduled for 2008 on the following dates:

14 January
3 March
2 June
1 September
10 November

An appropriate way forward may be to allocate one of the scheduled meetings as a training session for the Committee.

3.4 It is further suggested that the Committee determines its future Work Programme for 2008 at its first meeting of the year on 14 January 2008.

4.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Members are requested to note this report and to consider:

a) whether future Work Programmes should be compiled on the basis of a rolling 12 month schedule; and

b) whether to allocate one of the Committee's scheduled meetings for 2008 as a training session for the Committee.

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Background Documents:
None

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

20 September 2007

WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2006/7

MEETING	ITEM	REPORT REQUIRED	ETHICAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN REFERENCE	COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN REFERENCE	COMPLETED ?
6 November 2006	Training for Members of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee.	Report to detail the nature and extent of the training received.		Obj 5	√
	Ensuring clearly defined roles for the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council in relation to the promotion and communication of high ethical standards and conduct.	Report to set out an agreed statement from the Chief Executive and Leader and a Protocol for inclusion in Constitution.	A. Leadership	Obj 4, Actions 1 and 2	√
	Officers' Code of Conduct and Register of Interests.	Progress report.		Obj 5, Action 1	
	Members' Register of Interests on Website.	Progress report.		Obj 1, Action 4	√
	Standards Committee Communications Strategy.	Report presenting the amended Strategy for Members' consideration and also advising the referral of the Strategy to the Communications Unit for further consideration.			√
12 January 2007	The development of a clear statement of the Council's stance in relation to standards of Conduct.	A report setting out a draft of the statement to be presented for the approval of the Committee. Consider also how to increase public awareness of the Committee's work.		Obj 1, Action 1 Obj 2	√

	Standards Committee Communications Strategy	Further report to be presented to the Committee following consideration of, and guidance on, the Strategy by the Communications Unit.	C. Communication		√
	Training Plan	A report to be presented to the Committee setting out a training plan on ethical issues to encompass: 1) Training to officers and Members. 2) Training of the Standards Committee Members. 3) Engaging with the district authorities and partners on ethical standards training and the joint promotion of standards.	C. Communication	Obj 5, Action 2 Obj 2, Action 4	√
	*Complaints and findings from the Standards Board and guidance on specific issues to be issued to officers and Members.	Regular report in relation to complaints relevant to North Yorkshire County Council, and recent findings and developments nationally.		Obj 5	√ (ongoing)
19 March 2007	Define the roles of the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer, Senior Members, and Senior Managers in relation to the ethical framework.	Report presenting to the Committee for approval draft role descriptions for the Committee, the Monitoring Officer, the Executive and senior managers, outlining their involvement and means of publicising and raising awareness of the ethical framework.	A. Leadership B. Relationships	Obj 2, Action 1	√
	Review and update the content of material on ethical issues and procedures on the Intranet	A report advising Members of any changes required to the web site	C. Communication	Obj 1, Action 2 Obj 2, Action 1	Reviewed. Information

	and Internet for the public, staff and Members.	and intranet information.		Obj 2, Action 3 Obj 4, Action 2	requires updating.
	Review Officer Induction Information	Report advising Members of revised information in relation to standards and the registration of interests to be provided to employees during the induction process.	C. Communication	Obj 5	√
4 June 2007	Review Member/Officer Protocol and the Guidance Protocol.	Report on review of the Officer and Member Protocol and of the Guidance Protocol and also upon means of raising awareness of the Protocols amongst officers and Members (through the Constitution and training).	B. Relationships	Obj 5	√
	Produce user friendly statement of the Council's stance on ethical issues and rules of conduct to provide to contractors and other stakeholders.	Report producing a draft statement in relation to ethical standards.	E. Management of Standards	Obj 2, Action 3	√
1 October 2007	Review advice to officers and Members in relation to membership of Outside Bodies and potential conflicts.	Report on the review of advice provided to officers and Members on Outside Bodies.	E. Management of Standards	Obj 5	
	Develop links between the Codes of Conduct for officers and Members and other policies and procedures of the Council including those in relation to FOI, Human Rights, and Equality.	Report to set out draft links to be incorporated in the Code and policies.	E. Management of Standards	Obj 5	
12 November 2007	Review Member Induction Process in relation to ethical standards.. and the effectiveness and availability of existing guidance to officers and members in relation to ethical issues.	Report on the review of Members' induction on ethical issues, and guidance and information available to them and to officers.	C. Communication	Obj 6, Action 1	

	Review the effectiveness of existing Member training and attendance.	Report following a review of Member training.	C. Communication	Obj 5 Obj 6, Action 1	

Items to be reported back:

Item	Action Required	Current Progress	Report to which future meeting?	Completed?
Officers' Code of Conduct and Register of Interests.	Periodic update reports required.	Ongoing roll out of Register.		
New Register of Members' Interests	Update Members re outstanding registrations. Update Members re publishing new forms on website.	Outstanding registrations chased. Webform process in hand.		
Online standards documentation	Update standards information on NYCC website and intranet			
Standards Bulletin	Periodic Bulletins throughout the year.			

Action	Method		Who	Resources	By when	Outcomes	Evaluation	
What improvements need to be made	How will the action be achieved?		Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
A. LEADERSHIP								
1. Develop defined roles for Leader in Ethical Framework	MO, and Leader will work together to agree statement of roles		MO and Leader	Input of Senior Officers and Members	September 2006	Staff and Members will have an understanding of the role of the Leader in relation to the Ethical Framework	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	Role agreed by Council 12-06
2. Develop defined role for Chief Executive in Ethical Framework	MO, and Chief Executive will work together to agree statement of roles		MO and Chief Executive	Input of Senior Officers and Members	September 2006	Staff and Members will have an understanding of the role of the Chief Executive in relation to the Ethical Framework	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	Role agreed by Council 12-06
3. Develop defined roles for Senior Managers in relation to the Ethical Framework	MO and Asst Chief Executive (HR) will agree defined roles and behaviours		MO and Asst Chief Executive (HR)	Input of Senior Officers	December 2006	Senior Members will understand their role in disseminating the Council's stance on ethical issues	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	WP 19-03-07
4. Develop a mechanism to reinforce Executive involvement in ethical issues *The Standards Cttee has agreed this will be dealt with by the Leader's periodic attendance at Standards Cttee and the annual report of the Cttee also being sent to the Executive.*	Means of liaison between Standards Committee and the Executive will be developed.		MO and Head of Committee Services		April 2007	Executive and Standards Committee will have joint responsibility for high ethical standards	Executive will be recognised by Members and Officers as having a key role in ethics agenda	WP 19-03-07 *NB: dealt with – see Action column*

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What improvements need to be made		How will the action be achieved?	Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
B. Relationships								
1.	Review Member/Officer Protocol	MO/Head of Committee Services will review the existing protocol to update	MO and Head of Committee Services		December 2006 *The Standards Cttee has agreed this be considered in June 07.*	Protocol will clearly define the relationship in relation to ethical issues, and be updated	Revised Protocol	WP 04-06-07
2.	Raise awareness of Member/Officer Protocol amongst Members and Officers *The Standards Cttee has agreed this will be dealt with via ethics training for Members and Officers.*	Protocol will be readily available outside the Constitution to Officers and Members	MO and Head of Committee Services	IT resource for Intranet availability	April 2007	Members and Officers will be aware of the existence of the protocol	Reference to the protocol as issues arise	WP 04-06-07 *NB: dealt with – see Action column*
3.	Define and publicise the role of the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee in relation to the Ethical Framework *The Standards Cttee has agreed this will be dealt with via the Constitution and ethics training for Members and Officers.*	Information about the Standards Committee and MO roles will be readily available to officers	MO and Standards Committee	IT resource for Intranet availability	April 2007	Members and Officers will understand the respective roles	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	WP 19-03-07 *NB: dealt with – see Action column*
4.	Raise awareness amongst Members and Officers of the roles of those involved in delivering the Ethical Framework	Information about the Standards Committee and MO roles will be readily available to officers	MO and Standards Committee	IT resource for Intranet availability	April 2007	Members and Officers will understand the respective roles	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	As part of Communications Strategy and Training plan WP 12-01-07 and subsequent meetings

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C. COMMUNICATION								
1.	The action plan set out in the Standards Committee Communications Strategy be endorsed by the Council	The Council endorses the Communications Strategy of the Standards Committee	MO and Chairman of Standards Committee		Sept 2006	The authority's stance on communications in relation to ethical issues will be clear	Survey of wider public attitudes	WP 12-01-07
2.	That the Committee develops a clear statement of the Council's stance in relation to standards of Conduct							and subsequent meetings
3.	That the Committee seeks to work with the Leadership of the authority in communicating that stance.							*NB: dealt with – see Action column*
4.	That the Committee seeks to influence all Communications by the authority to encourage a culture of openness and honesty							
5.	That the Committee's own communications reflect the seven principles of public life.							
6.	That Communications identify the County Council to ensure that awareness raising is linked to the Council, its staff and Members.							
7.	That the Committee seeks to identify relevant statistical information about public trust in North Yorkshire							
8.	That the Committee seeks to work with Districts to promote the ethical agenda generally							

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Action	Method	Who	Resources	By when	Outcomes	Evaluation	
What improvements need to be made	How will the action be achieved?	Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
The Standards Cttee has agreed this Section C will be dealt with as part of the Communications Strategy.							
1. Induction							
(a) Review induction processes	New e-learning induction package will have a required element on the requirements of the officer code and the ethical framework	Monitoring Officer and	IT e-learning package needs to be up and running	September 2006	Staff will know of the requirement to complete register of interests, and will be aware of Standards Committee etc	Repeat of Self Assessment survey	WP 12-01-07

and subsequent meetings |
(b) Review recruitment documentation in relation to the requirement to complete the register of interests	Recruitment documentation will refer to the requirement to complete the register of officer interests where relevant	Asst Chief Executive (HR) and MO		April 2007	Recruitment documentation will refer to the requirement to complete the register of officer interests where relevant	Officers will proactively complete the register of interests	
(c) Review Member induction processes	Asst Chief Executive (HR) will review induction process for Members	Asst Chief Executive (HR) and MO		April 2008	Member Induction processes will provide clear advice to New Members about the Ethical Framework for Members and Officers	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey (with analysis for New Members)	
2. Training							
(a) Provide ethical training for key partners	Offer of appropriate	MO and Standards		April 2007	Greater awareness	Extension of Assessment	WP

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What improvements need to be made		How will the action be achieved?	Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
		training to key partnerships	Committee and Assistant CEX (Policy Perf and Pships)			amongst partners on key ethical issues	Survey to key stakeholders	12-01-07 and subsequent meetings
(b)	Provide training to officers on Partnerships and the ethical issues arising	Provide specific ethics training on the officers code and other issues to officers	MO and Partnerships Wkg Gp		April 2007	Greater awareness of officers on partnerships	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	WP 12-01-07 and subsequent meetings
(c)	Review the effectiveness of existing Member training and attendance	Review existing training for Members including induction	MO and Asst Chief Executive HR and Group Leaders		April 2008	Members all receive some training. Member awareness is high	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	
(d)	Conduct a regular audit of training received by Members and Officers on ethical issues	Database of training received by Members and Senior Officers	MO and Member Development Unit		April 2007	A clear understanding of what training each Member and Officer has received	All Members and Officers have received training	
3.	Electronic Information							
(a)	Review material on Ethical issues and procedures on the Intranet for staff and Members *The Standards Cttee has agreed this should be considered early in 2007. It may be appropriate to include a link to the Standards Bulletin and also to Use Key Messages to disseminate information.*	Creation of Intranet site on ethical issues for staff	MO	IT support	April 2007	Intranet presence on ethics	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	WP 19-03-07
(b)	Review the Internet site to include	Review current	MO	IT support	April 2007	Improvement	Repeat of Self	

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What improvements need to be made		How will the action be achieved?	Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
	information on the Council's Ethical Framework

The Standards Cttee has agreed this should be considered early in 2007. It may be appropriate to include a link to the Standards Bulletin and also to Use Key Messages to disseminate information. | website to provide more information | | | | Internet pages | Assessment Survey | WP 19-03-07 |
| (c) | Provide regular electronic updates to Senior Officers about the implementation and availability of information on policies and procedures | Regular bulletins to staff via email | MO | Support within legal services | December 2006 | Regular bulletins | Repeat of Self Assessment Survey | WP 19-03-07 |
| 4. | Communication with the public and stakeholders is addressed in the Standards Committee's Communications Strategy | Carry out action plan in Communications Strategy | MO | | July 2006 | Public awareness of work of NYCC on ethical issues | Public survey of attitudes to NYCC | WP 12-01-07

and subsequent meetings |
D. Accountability								
1.	Develop a review process which enables self analysis of decision making procedure	Procedure developed and followed	MO and Complaints Officers and Internal Auditor		April 2008	Process developed which is understood	Reduction in complaints	
2.	Examine ways of building accountability into statutory processes which appear to lack accountability	Review existing processes such as decision taking/ partnership documentation	MO and Head of Committee Services/partnership working group		April 2008	Clarity about who is responsible for decisions	Accountability	
E. MANAGEMENT OF STANDARDS								
1.	Develop clear guidance to officers and members on ethical issues in specific areas	Prepare specific guidance documents	MO and Standards Committee		Ongoing	Set of clear procedures for officers which are readily accessible	Repeat of surveys	

Action	Method	Who	Resources	By when	Outcomes	Evaluation	
What improvements need to be made	How will the action be achieved?	Who will take responsibility for action?	What resources are required to achieve improvement?	What is realistic?	What will change and improvement look and feel like?	How will success be monitored?	Work Programme (WP) Reference
2. Review advice to officers in relation to membership of Outside Bodies and potential conflicts	Extend Outside Bodies advice to officers and promote	MO and Standards Committee		December 2006	Guidance document	Repeat of survey	WP 01-10-07
3. Review the effectiveness and availability of existing guidance to officers and members in relation to ethical issues	Review and raise awareness about existing guidance	MO and Standards Committee		April 2008	Set of clear procedures for officers which are readily accessible	Repeat of survey	WP 01-10-07
4. Develop links between the Codes of Conduct for officers and Members and other policies and procedures of the Council	Ensure the Code of Conduct is reflected and referred to in other Council policies where appropriate	MO and Standards Committee		Ongoing	Other Council procedures cross reference with ethical guidance and Code of Conduct	Repeat of survey	WP 01-10-07
5. Produce user friendly statement of the Council's stance on ethical issues and rules of conduct to provide to contractors and other stakeholders	Produce eyecatching leaflet to provide to those involved in contracting with the authority	MO and Standards Committee		July 2007	Contractors are fully aware of the consequences of inappropriate gifts or approaches	Survey of contractors and stakeholders	WP 04-06-07
F. TEAM WORKING AND CO-OPERATION							
1. Provide joint training for officers and members on ethical issues	Provision of joint training sessions for officers and Members	MO and Standards Committee		April 2007	Greater awareness of officers of ethical issues	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey	WP 12-01-07 (Training Programme)
2. Develop a clear statement about the interaction of complaints between officers and members	Procedure developed and made readily available	MO and Complaints Officers and Internal Auditor		September 2007	Complaints handled effectively	Complaints statistics	