

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

14 January 2008

Standards Committee Work Programme 2008

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members' views on a draft Work Programme for the Standards Committee for the forthcoming year.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Each year, the Standards Committee agrees a future programme of work in relation to the ethical agenda. The Programme is then reviewed and monitored at each of the Committee's subsequent meetings.
- 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.

3.0 WORK PROGRAMME

- 3.1 A draft Work Programme for 2008 is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' comments. The Ethical Audit Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2, for ease of reference.
- 3.2 The Programme has been drafted in the same format as before and incorporates ongoing items from the Committee's previous Work Programme and standing items such as the Complaints and Findings Report, which are considered at every meeting. Annual items such as the Annual Report of the Standards Committee have been factored in to the Programme, along with other identified areas of work and update reports on ongoing matters.
- 3.3 Members are requested to consider the proposed Programme and whether they would wish to make any changes or include any other items.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members consider this report and, subject to any comments they may have, approve the Committee's future Work Programme.

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Background Documents:
None

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

27 November 2007

WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 2008

MEETING	ITEM	REPORT REQUIRED	ETHICAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN REFERENCE	COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN REFERENCE	COMPLETED?
14 January 08	Members' Register of Interests on Website.	Progress report.		Obj 1, Action 4	√
	SBE Case Review 2007	Information report.			
	Review advice to officers and Members in relation to membership of Outside Bodies and potential conflicts	Suggested amendments to guidance document.			
	Training	Progress report.			
	Community Fund Allocation Dispensations	Update report.			
	Citizen's Panel Questionnaire Results	Information report.			
	Feedback from Independent Members' Forum	Information report.			
	*Complaints and findings from the Standards Board	Standing report in relation to complaints relevant to NYCC, recent findings and developments nationally.		Obj 5	√ (ongoing)
	Work Programme for 2008	Setting out draft Programme for approval.			
3 March 08	Local filtering of complaints	Update report re progress of legislation.			

	Officers' Code of Conduct and Register of Interests.	Progress report.		Obj 5, Action 1	
	New Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality	Setting out draft new Protocol for Committee's consideration.			
	Members' Attendance at Committees	Periodic report from Head of Committee Services.			
	Corporate Complaints and Compliments Report	Periodic report from Chief Executive's Unit.			
	*Complaints and findings from the Standards Board	Standing report.		Obj 5	√ (ongoing)
	Work Programme	Standing report.			
2 June 08	Annual Report of Standards Committee	Report presenting draft Annual Report, to be presented to meeting of County Council on 23 July 2008.			
	Council's statement re standards	Periodic update report as to use made of statement.			
	Statement re role of senior managers in ethical framework	Periodic update report as to use made of statement.			
	Council's ethical statement for stakeholders.	Progress report on how statement is being used.			
	CEO and Leader general ethics statement	Progress report on how statement is being used.			

	Committee's Communications Strategy	Review effectiveness of Strategy.			
	*Complaints and findings from the Standards Board	Standing report.		Obj 5	√ (ongoing)
	Work Programme	Standing report.			
1 September 08	Training Plan 2009	Setting out suggestions for training for next year.			
	Corporate Complaints and Compliments Report	Periodic report from Chief Executive's Unit.			
	Independent Member appointment 2009	To consider the position of the Chairman's term of office which will end in May 2009.			
	*Complaints and findings from the Standards Board	Standing report.		Obj 5	√ (ongoing)
	Work Programme	Standing report.			
10 November 2008	Feedback from Annual Assembly TRAINING SESSION				

Items to be reported back:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Action Required</u>	<u>Current Progress</u>	<u>Report to which future meeting?</u>	<u>Completed?</u>
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 publishing new forms on website.	Webform process in hand.		
Council's statement re standards	Periodic update reports as to use required.			
Statement re role of senior managers in ethical framework	Periodic update reports as to use required.			
Statement for stakeholders	Periodic update reports as to use required.			
Standards Training (Members and Officers)	Periodic review of Training Plan and training delivered.			
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 <i>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.</i>	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 <i>NB: dealt with – see Action column</i>

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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 <i>The Standards Cttee has agreed this be considered in June 07.</i>	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 <i>The Standards Cttee has agreed this will be dealt with via ethics training for Members and Officers.</i>		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 <i>NB: dealt with – see Action column</i>
3. Define and publicise the role of the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee in relation to the Ethical Framework <i>The Standards Cttee has agreed this will be dealt with via the Constitution and ethics training for Members and Officers.</i>		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 <i>NB: dealt with – see Action column</i>
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 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

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<i>The Standards Cttee has agreed this Section C will be dealt with as part of the Communications Strategy.</i>								
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							

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(a) Provide ethical training for key partners		Offer of appropriate training to key partnerships	MO and Standards Committee and Assistant CEX (Policy Perf and Pships)		April 2007	Greater awareness amongst partners on key ethical issues	Extension of Assessment Survey to key stakeholders	WP 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 <i>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</i>		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

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Key Messages to disseminate information.								
(b)	Review the Internet site to include information on the Council's Ethical Framework <i>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.</i>	Review current website to provide more information	MO	IT support	April 2007	Improvement Internet pages	Repeat of Self 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	

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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	
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 eye-catching 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	MO and Standards		April 2007	Greater awareness of	Repeat of Self Assessment	WP 12-01-07

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		sessions for officers and Members	Committee			officers of ethical issues	Survey	(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	