

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10 May 2010

Annual Review of Ethical Audit Action Plan 2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review progress against the Committee's Ethical Audit Action Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2005/6, the authority undertook a comprehensive Ethical Audit resulting in an extensive, proactive Action Plan, which still informs the work of the Committee to date, via its Work Programme and Communications Strategy Action Plan.
- 2.2 The Ethical Audit Action Plan was previously considered by the Committee at each of its meetings, alongside its Work Programme. However, in 2008, given that the Action Plan objectives and action points were replicated in the Work Programme and Communications Strategy Action Plan, either identically or in essence, the Committee decided that the Ethical Audit Action Plan should no longer be presented to each meeting, but instead be considered by the Committee each year, for an annual check of issues contained within it.
- 2.3 The Ethical Audit Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1 to this report, for Members' information.

3.0 REVIEW

- 3.1 Members will see from the Ethical Audit Action Plan, how the types of action required have been incorporated into the Committee's Work Programme and Communications Strategy Action Plan. A full review of progress in relation to such issues is set out in the separate report to the Committee's meeting regarding the Standards Committee Communications Strategy. As Members will see, the vast majority of the Action Plan items have been actioned and work is ongoing to take the action points forward, many of which are ongoing matters, given their nature, with no specific resolution or end date.
- 3.2 In relation to those action points outstanding or only partially completed:
- Re Action C2(b) and (c): there is further work to be done in relation to standards issues and partnership working and discussion is taking place between officers on ways in which the standards statements and other relevant documentation could be used in the Council's partnerships governance work.
- 3.3 Members are requested to consider the Ethical Audit Action Plan.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members review the Ethical Audit Action Plan.

CAROLE DUNN
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

Background Documents:
None

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

29 April 2010

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
B. Relationships								
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
C. COMMUNICATION								
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	Repeat of Self Assessment Survey (with analysis for New Members)	

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						the Ethical Framework for Members and Officers		
2. Training								
(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	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
The Standards Cttee has agreed this								

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	<i>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>							
(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
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	

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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
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
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 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	