

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 1 DECEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, H.R. AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE DIAGNOSTIC

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to the Committee's attention the Audit Commission's Ethical Governance Diagnostic for a review of compliance with ethical issues within the Council. The document is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Audit Commission's proposed review will be based around the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 (Part 3: Conduct of local government members and employees) and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (in particular, Part 10: Ethical Standards). The Audit Commission points out in the draft document that one of the common aspects of failures of governance is not so much the absence of frameworks, controls and arrangements as the absence of appropriate behaviours and values amongst members and officers. The proposed review will look at compliance with statutory requirements and also at behaviour, culture and values.
- 2.2 Paragraphs 13 to 15 of the document set out the scope and objectives of the review, one of which is to see if "the Council is ensuring that the Standards Committee has access to the right information and support to enable it to do its job properly". It is also the intention to examine various documents relating to the work of this Committee and to interview the Chair and members of it.
- 2.3 The document also states that "to be of the most benefit to the Council, it is vital that this review has the commitment and support of senior officers and all political parties. To this end, we plan to agree the brief with the Cabinet, together with the opposition party". Any comments that this Committee wishes to make can be fed through to the Cabinet.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial or staffing implications arising directly out of this report.

4. Other Implications

- 4.1 There are no implications arising directly out of this report in terms of equal opportunities, ethnic minorities, the elderly or the disabled; nor are there any implications relating to community safety, human rights, Local Agenda 21, planning or social inclusion.

5. Local Member Support

- 5.1 The report has no implications for individual wards.

6. Background Papers

6.1 No background papers have been used in the preparation of this report.

7. Decision Required

7.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and to request the officers to prepare an action plan for the review.

Bill Norman

Director of Law, H.R. and Asset Management

21 November 2008