



AGENDA ITEM: 11

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
27 October 2009**

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE: 28 January 2009**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

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SUBJECT: ETHICAL GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise Members of the Ethical Governance Toolkit produced by the IDeA and seek endorsement for a way forward for the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2.1 That, taking into account existing arrangements and how resource intensive undertaking the main elements of the Ethical Governance Toolkit could be, this matter should not be taken any further at present but the availability of this material be noted.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3.1 That the approach taken by the Standards Committee be endorsed.

4.0 ETHICAL GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

4.1 The Ethical Governance Toolkit has been produced jointly by the Standards Board for England, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Audit Commission as a development tool.

4.2 The toolkit consists of four main elements which can be mixed and matched:

Tool	Length of time	Approx. Cost	To be Undertaken by
Full Audit	7-10	£15,000	Audit Commission
Light Touch Health Check	1-2 days	£6,300 or In house	IDeA or Member Services
Self Assessment Online Survey	1-4 days (15 minutes to complete)	£4,500	Audit Commission
Development Workshops	1 day each	£1,800 In house	Audit Commission/IDeA or Council Secretary and Solicitor

5.0 LIGHT TOUCH HEALTH CHECK

- 5.1 The IDeA are recommending that each of the four elements should be undertaken by outside trainers/assessors/peer review, although it is suggested that the Light Touch Health Check could be facilitated by Member Services staff.
- 5.2 Unlike the name suggests however, the Light Touch Health Check requires significant input and the commitment from facilitators and attendees.
- 5.3 The Light Touch Health Check would involve a number of interviews with individuals to find out their thoughts on ethical issues in order to come up with an action plan of areas that need developing. Questions are provided in the Toolkit. The interviews would involve the Chief Executive, The Leader, the Standards Committee Chairman, the Monitoring Officer, the Opposition Leader, Scrutiny Chairman, an Employee focus group, the Section 151 officer, a Councillor focus group and if felt required, Parish Council and Partner Organisations.

6.0 DEVELOPMENTAL WORKSHOPS

- 6.1 The Toolkit states that the development workshops should be tailored to needs which are identified from the diagnostic work undertaken, however from the examples provided, a large section is already being covered through the Annual Code of Conduct Training session.

7.0 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

- 7.1 The Council has a very proactive Standards Committee and a number of the issues raised throughout the Toolkit document are already being addressed. The Standards Committee Annual Report 2008/09 provides details of all good practice being undertaken and the Committee's Work Programme takes forward many of these issues. Members may therefore consider that there is no need for a resource intensive exercise to be undertaken such as set out above.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 8.1 These matters relate to the promotion of high ethical standards at a local level.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific financial or resource implications arising from this report, however should members wish to pursue any elements of the Ethical Governance Toolkit, there would need to be a significant growth bid submitted in the 2009/10 budget as no in house resources are available for this work and external costs, as will have seen in the table at paragraph 4.2 above, are substantial.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 There is no legal requirement to use this development tool, the Standards Committee, supported by the Council Secretary and Solicitor, will continue to adopt a proactive approach in the work it undertakes.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

1. How ethical is Your Governance? – IDeA – October 2009
2. Ethical Governance Toolkit? How ethical is your governance? Ethical Governance light touch health check and benchmark – IDeA – October 2009