

Meeting:	Standards Committee
Date:	21 September 2009
Subject:	Ethical governance project
Responsible Officer:	Hugh Peart Director of Legal and Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn Portfolio Holder Performance, Communications and Corporate Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Ethical governance draft project brief

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out a summary of a project on ethical governance to be carried out by the Audit Commission.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to note the report.

Section 2 – Report

Background

The Council has agreed with the Audit Commission that it should carry out an audit to assess how far the Council is complying with the principles of good governance. In order to carry out this assessment, the Commission will look at how far the Council is complying with the statutory requirements related to the members' code of conduct and the operation of the standards committee as well as at behaviour culture and values. The Commission will also look at how far the Council is complying with KLOE 2.3, its measure for good governance. The Commission will make recommendations for areas of further development, including identifying any training needs for members and officers.

The audit will be carried out by:

- reviewing relevant documentation,
- an on-line survey of members and senior officers,
- meetings with the Leader, Chief Executive, member, senior management and Standards Committee members
- A meeting with the monitoring officer who will answer a set of questions.

Feedback will be provided to the Council, including to the Standards Committee.

The attached project brief is currently in draft but it is not expected to change significantly.

Financial Implications

The project will cost around £20,000. Last year the Audit Commission was due to conduct a regeneration inspection as part of their work plan. This work was paid for. However, in the event it was agreed that this should not be carried out. As a result, the council has a credit with the commission of £67k, and it was agreed that this would be used to fund ethical governance work. The project cost is therefore being met from this credit.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No
Separate risk register in place? No

There is a risk that the Council will not achieve its aim to improve its on KLOE 2.3, the Audit Commission's measure of good governance.

Legal Implications

The Commission will be looking at how far the Council complies with its statutory obligations as mentioned above.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 September 2009		
Name: Jessica Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 7 September 2009		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Caroline Eccles, Senior Assistant Lawyer – Employment and Governance,
telephone 0208 424 7580

Background Papers:
Local Government Act 2000, Part III
Members' code of conduct

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES