

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Ethical Governance Survey and Internal Audit

7th October 2010

Report of Internal Audit Manager and the Monitoring Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform and seek the views of the Committee on the results of a survey into Ethical Governance undertaken in October to December 2009.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members consider the results of the ethical governance survey, the conclusions reached and the action plan drawn up as a result of the internal audit report and comment on:
- a) the outcome of the survey, making suggestions as necessary for any further or alternative action they would like to see; and
 - b) the value of the exercise and whether any future repetition of the process would be welcomed.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Proposals to undertake a survey into ethical governance issues were prompted by comments made by the external auditor in evaluating the council's Use of Resources for 2008/09.
- 1.2 The Ethical Governance Survey was developed by Internal Audit in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Head of Democratic Services and sought to ascertain the adequacy of the council's ethical governance framework through assessing the levels of Member and employee understanding and perceptions of ethical governance and related policies and practices. It was envisaged that the results could provide a baseline against which progress could be measured by conducting similar surveys in future. The survey contained a range of questions in the following sections:
- **Ethical Standards and Conduct**
 - **Constitutional Framework**
 - **Roles and Responsibilities**
 - **Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Arrangements**
 - **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

- **Information and Communication**

- 1.3 All Members and employees were invited to take part in the survey, which took place over a six week period between October and December 2009. Questions were grouped into six sections and at the end of each section responders had the opportunity to include additional comments and/or suggestions on how the council could improve its overall arrangements. Employees were also asked to provide the name of their Service and their level of employment.

2.0 Results

- 2.1 Fifteen Members (25%) and 147 employees (approx 15%) chose to complete and return the survey. Responses were received from employees in all Services, representing all levels of the Authority including manual and clerical staff, senior and middle management and chief officers.
- 2.2 The detailed results from the survey are included in the report attached at Appendix A.
- 2.3 Drawing on the results of the survey, Internal Audit have carried out their own evaluation and, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, produced a report with proposed action plan, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 Arrangements are in hand to make the results of the survey available throughout the council.
- 3.2 This report has been submitted to the Audit Committee on 22nd September 2010 as well as to this Committee. In both instances, members of the Committee are asked to consider the results of the survey, and the conclusions reached and action plan drawn up as a result of the internal audit report. Members are also asked to comment on the outcome of the survey, and to make suggestions for any further or alternative action they would like to see, and to comment on the value of the exercise and whether any future repetition of the process would be welcomed. The comments of the Audit Committee will be reported orally at the meeting.

4.0 Details of Consultation

- 4.1 Not applicable

5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 5.1 The options available to members are to accept the results of the survey and the internal audit report as presented, or to comment and recommend further/alternative action as appropriate.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
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(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None identified

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report
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SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been involved in the preparation of this report and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been involved in the preparation of this report and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ethical Governance Survey

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Ref: aud/audcomm/100922/EthicalSurvey