2007/2008 Ethical Audit Action Plan

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Main Issue	Detail of survey findings	Actions required to deal with survey findings	Action Number	Proposed Specific Measurable Action	Date for completion
Members' Code of Conduct	**Member Awareness** Small number of Members don't know about the Code of Conduct and whether they have agreed to abide by it. Some uncertainty as to the status of these Members (i.e. elected or co-opted)	Identify Members who need to be aware of Members Code – to include elected Members and co-opted members. Consideration to be given within this process to the application of the Code of Conduct to non-voting co-opted members. Need for training in relation to Code and include reference to Nolan principles.	1a	Principal Corporate Governance Officer to prepare a training plan in relation to Members Code of Conduct by commencement of 07/08 municipal year. Corporate Governance Team to report to 12th July 2007 meeting of Standards Committee.	12/07/07
		Review procedure for accepting office and signing up to Code for all Members – ensure sufficient weight is placed on the importance of the Code.	1b	Chief Democratic Services Officer to review procedure for acceptance of office for Members by commencement of 07/08 municipal year. The Chief Democratic Services Officer to report to 12th July 2007 meeting of Standards Committee as part of the report on the Members Induction Period 2007.	12/07/07
	Officer Awareness High proportion of officers don't know that the Council has a Code of Conduct for Members. Concerns about whether complaints may not	Consider the relevance of parts of the ethical framework to the Council values. Seek to include reference where appropriate in promulgation of those values.	2a	Corporate Communications team to consider impact and relevance of ethical framework on Council values and to ensure that the communications plan in relation to the values includes appropriate reference. Head of Corporate Communications to report to 10th October meeting of Standards Committee.	10/10/07

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	get forwarded due to lack of awareness.	Carry out further analysis of survey results in order to identify any comparisons or contrasts between departments and/or grading groups.	2b	Corporate Human Resources to carry out further analysis of survey results and together with Corporate Governance team to compile ethical framework training and awareness programme for officers by November 2007. Head of Human Resources Strategy to report to 5th December meeting of Standards Committee.	05/12/07
		Prepare a briefing on the Ethical Framework for presentation to Departmental Management Teams. Seek the view of DMTs as to how relevant parts of the message can be further cascaded to departmental officers.	2c	See 2b	05/12/07
		Include reference to the Members Code within the induction process for all officers.	2d	See 2b	05/12/07
		Identify those officers who have a need for in depth awareness of the Member Code. (For example those who have responsibility for complaints). Identify the nature of the information required by these officers and provide appropriate training and supporting documentation.	2e	See 2b	05/12/07

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		Consider the inclusion of an Ethical Governance Module within the Council Training Programme, to make compulsory for identified groups of officers. The Module to include reference to the Member Code of Conduct. Ethical Governance will be an identifiable training need in the Personal Development Plan process.		See 2b	05/12/07
		Review the distribution of Governance Matters. If a wider distribution is considered appropriate consider the writing style and content adopted to ensure suitable to wider audience.	2f	Corporate Governance Team, in conjunction with Corporate Human Resources to review distribution, style and content of Governance Matters by November 2007.	01/11/07
		Consider use of Team Talker and Intranet Log in pages for wide spread publication and advertisement of one off messages, for example the implementation of the New Code of Conduct.	2g	Head of Corporate Communications to report to 10th October meeting of Standards Committee in relation to use of Team Talker and Intranet Log in Pages for promulgation of Ethical Agenda.	10/10/07

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	Breach Level of confusion regarding the process for submitting complaints, as well as a large proportion of Members and officers who feel that referrals are not always made appropriately or without fear of reprisal.	Set concerns into context of White Paper and plans for more localised consideration of referrals. Due for implementation in 2008. Regular reports to Standards Committee should dispel perception that referrals are not made appropriately within Leeds[1].	**3a**	Corporate Governance Officer to continue to make 6 monthly reports to Standards Committee giving details of referrals made under the Code of Conduct.	Ongoing
		Training in relation to new Code of Conduct to cover removal of requirement to refer and inclusions of provisions in relation to protection of complainant, witnesses and investigators in relation to any referral.	**3b**	See action 1a.	12/07/07
	Interests And Gifts & Hospitality Not all Members and officers are aware of the register of gifts and whether it is reviewed. More awareness of the register of interests but a level of confusion between the	Training for all Members on New Code in accordance with report to Standards Committee regarding its implementation.	**4a**	See action 1a.	12/07/07
		Training for legal officers clerks who advise Committees.	**4b**	Corporate Governance Team to offer appropriate training on new Member code of conduct to Legal and Democratic Services Staff involved in committee process within 2 months of publication of new Model Code.	24/07/07

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[1]   See also comments in relation to Standards Committee contained within Session 2

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	different types of interests which need declaring and the correct action to take.	Governance Services to continue sending an aide memoir to Members to assist them with identifying potential personal and prejudicial interests in agenda items.	**4c**	Governance Services to continue sending an aide memoir to Members of identified committees to assist them in making appropriate declarations.	Ongoing
Officer Code of Conduct	**Officer awareness** Large proportion of officers are unaware of the code and whether they have to abide by it. Results show variations between grades and departments.	Include relevant details of officer code in Ethical Governance Module of Council Training Programme and Ethical Framework Briefing.	**5a**	See action 2b	05/12/07
		Human Resources to link with organisational development work undertaken in conjunction with Barkers. Contain within more detailed consideration of role of Strategic Directors and Chief Officers in relation to ethical governance.	**5b**	Corporate Human Resources to ensure that development of key competencies and behaviours for managers includes appropriate reference to ethical framework. Head of Human Resources Strategy to report to 5th December meeting of Standards Committee.	05/12/07
	Member awareness Almost the same proportion of Members are unaware of the officer code of	HR to present a report to Standards Committee in relation to the registration of officer interests	**6a**	Head of Human Resources Strategy to present a report to 11th April 2007 and 12th July meetings of Standards Committee in relation to the registration of officer interests.	12/07/07

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	conduct.	Establish with DCLG and report to Standards Committee the time line for implementation of the revised Officer Code of Conduct.	**6b**	Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to present report to Standards Committee when possible setting out available information and proposals in relation to implementation of new Officer Code of Conduct.	When information becomes available
Protocol on Member Officer Relations	**Awareness of content, including in relation to Bullying** Problems in relation to showing respect and harassment between Members and officers. Problems seem to be exaggerated in certain departments.	Training in relation to New Code of Conduct to include new provisions in relation to bullying.	**7a**	See actions 1a and 2b.	12/07/07 05/12/07
		Carry out more detailed analysis of statistics to show breakdown in relation to departmental and grading groups.	**7b**	See action 2b.	05/12/07

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	Member involvement in operational matters A high proportion of officers believe Members involve themselves inappropriately with operational matters. Could show a misunderstanding of the Members' role or may be down to the work of the department.	Seek to identify what element of statistics relates to perception and/or lack of information in respect of appropriate ward representative role for Members. Use this information to formulate further detailed actions to include consideration of:- • 'myth busting' • Role play representation of appropriate and inappropriate Member involvement[2]	**7c**	See action 2b.	05/12/07
Whistle blowing policy	**Awareness** Low awareness of the policy amongst Members and officers.	A revised, simplified and more user friendly whistle blowing policy is to be introduced, and advertised through a poster campaign. The revised policy is also to be advertised to the general public through the Council's internet pages.	**8a**	Revised scheme to be introduced by end March 2007. Head of Internal Audit to report to 23rd April 2008 meeting of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in relation to implementation and success of revised scheme.	23/04/08
	Clarity of content An even higher proportion think the content of the policy is unclear.	As above.	**8b**	As above.	26/09/07

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[2]   See for example DVD's prepared by Knowsley Council

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	Use There is a widespread belief that the policy is often used inappropriately and cannot be used without fear of reprisal.	As above.	**8c**	As above.	26/09/07
Ethical Framework	**Legislation – Human Rights, Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Equalities, etc.** Evidence suggests that Members and officers are unsure whether the Members' Code is integrated into relevant schemes, policies and procedures. Members and officers do not feel that they have received sufficient training.	The Member Development Group to be asked to consider the implementation of appropriate training for Members in these fields. This will link to the proposed requirement in the new model code that a Member must not "do anything which may seriously prejudice his or her authority's ability to comply with any of its statutory duties under the equality enactments".	**9a**	Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to arrange for consideration by the Member Development Group. Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to report to 5th December meeting of Standards Committee in relation to proposals for Member Training and Development in relation to these issues.	05/12/07
		Corporate Human Resources to be asked to consider the question of officer training and to cascade this appropriately through departmental Human Resources teams.	**9b**	See action 2b.	05/12/07

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	Impact – understanding among Members and Officers A significant proportion of officers and Members are unsure whether the Council's approach encourages appropriate behaviour or is building public confidence in local democracy.	Create a Standards Committee Communication Plan, which will identify and segment audiences and objectives, will identify appropriate media for communication and allocate timescales.	**10a**	Corporate Communications Team to create Standards Committee Communication Plan. Head of Corporate Communications to report to 10th October meeting of Standards Committee.	10/10/07
		Seek to strengthen 'Guide dog' role of Standards Committee - include an ambassadorial role which will develop an outward facing dialogue, allowing visibility of the Committee. Also consider publication of brief Standards Committee Bulletins between Annual Reports, advising of Standards Committee's hot topics.	**10b**	Head of Governance Services to facilitate informal meetings of groups of Standards Committee Members (Elected Members, Parish Members, Independent Members) in order to consider formal and informal development of Members roles. Meetings to take place by end December 2007.	31/12/07
		Human Resources to include issues within competencies and behaviours for managers. Also to include within the induction and recruitment procedures. In addition the officer response to the survey is to be included within the Director's appraisal bundles, with an intention that the issues raised will be cascaded further through the management chain.	**10c**	See action 5b.	05/12/07

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		Further investigative work with officers can take place through the staff survey.	**10d**	Corporate Human Resources to liaise with Corporate Governance Team in relation to additional areas for questioning within staff survey in 2007/08 municipal year.	May 2008
			10e	Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to facilitate consideration of issues by Member Development Group. Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to report any comments or suggestions arising from discussion to 5th December meeting of Standards Committee.	05/12/07
	Communication of high ethical standards A significant proportion of Members and officers feel that the importance of high ethical standards are only sometimes or rarely communicated to Members, officer and local communities.	As above.			
	Challenge culture Survey results indicate that some Members and officers	Need for investigation of formal and informal decision making processes.			

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	are not sure that decisions can be challenged within the Council without fear of reprisal, by Members officers or the Council's partners. A significant proportion of Members and officers are unsure that the Council's complaints system is clear and accessible.	Consideration of training and communication in relation to formal processes under Constitution.	**11a**	See action 9a.	05/12/07
		Also work through managerial competencies and behaviours to ensure growth of challenge culture in relation to informal decision making.	**11b**	See action 5b.	05/12/07
		Need to establish that Corporate Customer Relations Manager is satisfied that there is a complaints system which is clear and accessible and is working.	**11c**	Corporate Governance Team to refer statistics from the Ethical Audit 2006 to the Corporate Customer Relations Manager to consider whether the system is clear and accessible and is working and to consider how to improve Members and officers awareness of the system.	13/02/08
Standards Committee	**Existence & Profile** A small proportion of Members, larger of officers are unaware of the existence of Standards Committee.	Needs to raise the profile of Standards Committee compared to other Council bodies. Consider informal liaison with Scrutiny Support to establish how they have achieved this.	**12a**	Head of Governance Services to liaise with Head of Scrutiny and Member Development in order to learn from the Scrutiny experience of raising the profile of Scrutiny Board.	13/02/08
		Work with co-opted Members of the Council in relation to the ethical framework.	**12b**	See action 1a.	12/07/07

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	Role A small proportion of Members, larger of officers are unsure of the role of Standards Committee.	Consider strengthening of relationships with the media – using 'negative' news stories to portray positive aspects of ethical framework etc.	**12c**	See action 10a.	10/10/07
	Large numbers of Members and officers don't agree or don't know that the Standards Committee makes a positive difference to the ethical environment.	Explore links between Elected Members of Committee and their party groups.	**12d**	See action 10b.	13/02/08
	Achievements Members and officers are unsure whether Standards Committee operates effectively or whether it adds value to the Council.		**13a**	See action 10a.	10/10/07
Leadership	**Profile of Leader** Relatively low proportion of Members and officers feel that the Leader is a positive ethical role model, and that he promotes the importance of the ethical agenda.	Access detailed information in order to benchmark against other local authorities.	**14a**	Corporate Governance Team to access additional information from other authorities in Audit Commission survey results. These results to be shared with the Leaders Office for comment.	13/02/08
		Explore profile with leader's office – seek to strengthen links with the Standards Committee.	**14b**	See 14a	13/02/08

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		Chair of Standards Committee to raise issue, and possible avenues for increasing profile, with Leader during quarterly meetings.	**14c**	See 14a	13/02/08
	Profile of Chief Executive Relatively low proportion of Members and officers feel that the Chief Executive is a positive ethical role model, and that he promotes the importance of the ethical agenda.	Statistics for Chief Executive very similar to those for Leader.	**15a**	Corporate Governance Team to access additional information from other authorities in Audit Commission survey results. These results to be shared with the Chief Executive's Office for comment.	13/02/08
		Explore with Chief Executive but also look to responsibilities of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer in terms of championing ethical governance.			
	Requirement for and Profile of Monitoring Officer Small proportion of Members and officers feel that the Monitoring Officer is only sometimes or rarely able to carry out her role appropriately. Large proportion of officers don't know.	Demystify role of Monitoring Officer.	**15b**	Monitoring Officer annual report to 11th April 2007 meeting of Standards Committee.	11/04/07

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	Members' decision making Concern that Members are only sometimes or rarely a focus for positive change, lack of clarity over Member accountability. Significant proportions of Members and officers unsure that the public can access information in relation to decision making.	Scrutiny Inquiry into transparency of decision making, to include consideration of accessibility of information through Council's internet site.	**16a**	Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to identify terms of reference for Inquiry. To report to 10th October meeting of Standards Committee detailing terms of reference and proposed timetable for Inquiry.	10/10/07
		Look into web-streaming of council meetings to influence behaviour and increase awareness and understanding of the public	**16b**	Corporate Communications Team to investigate use of web-streaming techniques by other authorities together with the potential for and appropriateness of use within Leeds City Council. Head of Corporate Communications to report to 6th February 2008 meeting of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee	06/02/08
Communications	**Communication between Members and officers** Concerns from both Members and officers that communication is not always open and constructive.	Include within work undertaken in relation to Member/Officer Relations Protocol.	**17a**	See actions 2b and 9a.	05/12/07

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	Communication with public Concern re public ability to access Member code of conduct, register of interests and documents relating to Standards Committee.	Consider within Scrutiny Inquiry on transparency of decision making / other governance information.	**18a**	See action 16a.	10/10/07