



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 16th October 2008

Subject: Local Government Chronicle Awards 2009: Standards and Ethics Entry

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Committee of the Leeds City Council entry to the 'Standards and Ethics' category of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2009.
2. The deadline to submit an entry was Thursday 9th October 2008. Much of the entry was drawn from the Standards Committee Annual Report and the Council's Corporate Governance Statement for 2008. Members of the Standards Committee were asked to provide ideas for the Leeds City Council entry by Friday 8th August 2008. An entry was then drafted and circulated for comments prior to being submitted.
3. Entering the award gives the Standards Committee an opportunity to raise its profile within Leeds City Council and amongst its peers. Reaching the final shortlist or winning the award, would demonstrate that the Council's standards have been judged to be among the best in the country, which will be a positive message to communicate to the general public in the Leeds area.
4. Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the information in this report and the attached appendix.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Committee of the Leeds City Council entry to the 'Standards and Ethics' category of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2009.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Standards Board for England recently announced that they will be sponsoring the new "Standards and Ethics" award category at the 2009 LGC Awards. On 10th July 2008 the Chair of the Standards Board sent every Standards Committee Chair a letter regarding the new award category, encouraging them to submit an entry.

2.2 Both the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer thought it would be appropriate for Leeds City Council to submit an entry for the award.

2.3 The award will go to the authority that can prove they have put ethical standards at the heart of their culture and at the core of their governance. The judges will be looking for entries which describe how their authority's commitment to promoting ethical standards has improved public trust in local democracy. Entries must also provide evidence of an innovative approach to promoting high standards of member conduct and how the ethical standards agenda has the full, proactive support of the council's leadership.

2.3 The entry criteria for the award are as follows:

- Identify your principal achievements from October 2007 to September 2008
- Provide convincing evidence for your success — for example customer surveys, benchmarking
- Show how your teams' work fits into the overall objectives of the council
- Focus on the content rather than the presentation, your entry should be clearly laid out but you will not score marks for design
- Don't bog down the judges, or yourselves, by preparing reams of appendices — keep any supplementary information short, relevant and clear
- If you have been working with outside partners such as voluntary groups or companies, include their endorsement in your submission
- Don't forget the basics — the judges will be looking for proof that your team is meeting all its service obligations
- Show the judges how you provide first class customer care
- Think what makes your team a winner — show imagination, vision and enthusiasm

2.4 The deadline to submit an entry was Thursday 9th October 2008. Much of the entry was drawn from the Standards Committee Annual Report and the Council's Corporate Governance Statement for 2008. Members of the Standards Committee were asked to provide ideas for the Leeds City Council entry by Friday 8th August 2008. An entry was then drafted and circulated for comments prior to being submitted.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The final award entry was split into five key issue areas:

- Member conduct
- Officer conduct

- Regular audits of the Council's ethical arrangements
- Local assessment of complaints
- Standards Committee's relationships

3.2 An introduction was also provided to demonstrate how work in these areas contributes to the Council's overall priorities, and listing the key achievements in these areas during October 2007 to September 2008. These key achievements include work to train Members on the Code of Conduct, the creation and delivery of the Ethical Audit Action Plan and the Council's Use of Resources Comprehensive Performance Assessment score.

3.3 A copy of the final award entry as submitted is attached as appendix 1.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 Entering the award gives the Standards Committee an opportunity to raise its profile within Leeds City Council and amongst its peers. Reaching the final shortlist or winning the award, would demonstrate that the Council's standards have been judged to be among the best in the country, which will be a positive message to communicate to the general public in the Leeds area.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 There are no legal or resource implications to this report.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The deadline to submit an entry was Friday 3rd October 2008. Much of the entry was drawn from the Standards Committee Annual Report and the Council's Corporate Governance Statement for 2008. Members of the Standards Committee were asked to provide ideas for the Leeds City Council entry by Friday 8th August 2008. An entry was then drafted and circulated for comments prior to being submitted.

6.2 A copy of the final entry is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the information in this report and the attached appendix.

Background documents referred to in this report

Standards Committee Annual Report 2007-2008, available at

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.asp?ID=248&sch=doc&cat=519&path=0,467>

Corporate Governance Statement 2008, available at

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.asp?ID=244&sch=doc&cat=516&path=0,467>

Code of Corporate Governance, available at

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.asp?ID=244&sch=doc&cat=516&path=0,467>

Council Business Plan, available at

http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Council_Publications/Democracy/Leeds_Strategic_Plan_2008_to_2011.aspx

Ethical Audit Action Plan 2006

Governance Matters newsletter, available at

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.asp?ID=245&sch=doc&cat=517&path=0,467>

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to Standards Committee on 5th December 2007, "Update: Informed, Transparent Decision Making – Officer Declarations"
Leeds City Council's Whistleblowing Policy, updated December 2007.

Report of the Director of Resources to Standards Committee on 10th October 2007
"Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Use of Resources"

Department for Communities and Local Government's consultation on "Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England", available at
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/laconduct>