



Report of the Chief Officer (Human Resources)

Standards Committee

Date: 17th February 2010

Subject: Ethical Audit Action Plan: Human Resource Issues Update

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. At its meeting in July 2009 the Standards Committee considered a report by the Chief Officer (Human Resources) providing an update on ongoing work from the Ethical Audit Action Plan. At this meeting the Committee requested further information on:
 - a) 360 degree appraisals; and
 - b) Staff Survey 2009.

2. This report contains:
 - a) detail of the background to and process for, the 2009 staff 360 degree process;
 - b) the background to, and detail of the take-up of, the 2009 staff survey; and
 - c) detailed analysis of questions relating to the section of the staff survey titled “working in the public sector”

3. The Standards Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

- 1.1. This report provides the further information requested by the Committee in July 2009, following an update on the actions assigned to the Chief Officer (Human Resources) from the Ethical Audit Action Plan.
- 1.2. In particular this report seeks to address the following items:
 - 360 degree appraisals; and
 - The 2009 Staff Survey.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The ethical audit of 2006 considered how the Council performed in a number of ways relating to ethical governance.
- 2.2 The Audit findings highlighted gaps in awareness, knowledge and skills across a number of areas. Specifically:
 - the audit findings showed that a significant proportion of officers were unaware of their responsibility to abide by the Officers' Code of Conduct;
 - a significant proportion of Officers are 'fairly' or 'very unclear' about their responsibilities under the Ethical Framework; and
 - a significant proportion of Officers did not understand the role of the Standards Committee, or the Whistle Blowing Policy.
- 2.3 In consequence, the Standards Committee requested that the Chief Officer (Human Resources) address these findings by ensuring:
 - awareness was better promoted; and
 - this was embedded, i.e. that key competencies and behaviours for managers made appropriate reference to the Ethical Framework.
- 2.4 In considering a progress report in July 2009, the Standards Committee raised additional questions, which are considered below under the headings:
 - 360 degree appraisals; and
 - The 2009 Staff Survey.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 360 Degree Process

- 3.1.1 Further information in regard to the background to, and process for, the 2009 360 degree process for senior manager is included as Appendix 1, extracted from the evaluation of the process.
- 3.1.2 315 officers participated in the 360 Degree Process, on grade bands from Director 40% to the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 3.1.3 Each officer at this level has received an individual report showing how they compare to this average. The same report has been proved to each individual's manager for discussion at their annual appraisal.
- 3.1.4 The 360 degree feedback process is currently being reviewed in advance of the 2010 appraisal cycle.

- 3.1.5 The results of the Staff Survey have been compared with the results of the Ethical Audits which were undertaken in 2006 and 2007, for the Committee's information. This is attached at Appendix 3.
- 3.2 Staff Survey 2009
- 3.2.1 In common with most progressive organisations the City Council has carried out a Staff Survey for some years now with the most recent survey undertaken on an 18-month cycle to coincide with the Council's 3-Year Business Plan.
- 3.2.2 The Director of Resources is accountable for ensuring that the staff survey takes place; the responsibility for the survey is through the Chief Officer (Human Resources). In July 2009, the Chief Officer (Human Resources) officers undertook to provide an update to this Committee once the results of the Survey were available. This report provides such an update.
- 3.2.3 The 2009 survey was sent to 17,201 staff. The response rate for the previous Staff Survey was 41%. The target for the 2009 Staff Survey was 43% (7,396 respondents). The actual response rate for the 2009 Survey was 44.3% (7,620 respondents).
- 3.2.4 The data is collected to allow analysis down to Service level to ensure that resources are deployed in a targeted fashion to address issues which may be highlighted at this level. The staff survey informs a number of work strands and targets beyond those below.
- 3.2.5 Appendix 2 to this report is an extract from the Corporate report showing the results of a new Section in the 2009 Survey which measures "Working in the Public Sector".
- 3.2.6 The headline trends from this level are:
- 76% (5,791 respondents) understand the role of a Councillor;
 - 58% (4,420 respondents) know how to raise concerns about work related matters involving Councillors;
 - 55% (4,191 respondents) are aware that the Members' Code of Conduct is available in the Council's Constitution;
 - 41% (3,124 respondents) are aware that the Members'/Officers' protocol is available in the Council's Constitution;
 - 50% (3,810 respondents) are aware that the Officers' Code of Conduct is available in the Council's Constitution;
 - 68% (5,182 respondents) are aware that they are required to register interests which may affect their work; and
 - 80% (6,096 respondents) are aware that they have to register gifts or hospitality.
- 3.2.7 Higher graded officers consistently scored above these headline figures. Officers with a longer length of service consistently score higher than officers with less service.
- 3.2.8 The Service level reports have not yet been produced. Once they are available further analysis will take place to identify significant Service trends.
- 3.2.9 Staff Survey results for directorates and the Council will be available on the intranet before the Standards Committee meeting in February 2010; Service level reports

will be published on the intranet by the end of the week commencing 15 February 2010.

- 3.2.10 The results of the Staff Survey have been compared with the results of the Ethical Audits which were undertaken in 2006 and 2007, for the Committee's information. This is attached at Appendix 3.

3.3 Response to staff survey and senior managers feedback

- 3.3.1 HR officers will now work with Services to address significant issues within that Service identified by the staff survey. The results of the "working in the public sector" part of the survey will be used to shape HR's work programme in this year.

4.0 **Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

- 4.1 The results of the 360 degree appraisal of Senior Officers and the Staff Survey will be used to shape the future HR work programme to improve the understanding of ethical governance issues in the organisation.

5.0 **Legal and Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Any subsequent actions will be met from within existing resources.

6.0 **Conclusions**

- 6.1 The information from the 2009 Staff Survey and Senior Managers 360 Feedback provides a useful baseline for the current level of awareness of staff on ethical governance issues. The next stage will be to analyse Service level information so that targeted actions can be taken.

7.0 **Recommendations**

- 7.1 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

Background documents

Ethical Audit Action Plan 2006

Standards Committee Minutes, 8 July 2009

Report of the Chief Officer Human Resources, "Ethical Audit Action Plan: Human Resources Issues", presented to the Standards Committee 8 July 2009

Report of the Chief Officer Human Resources, "Ethical Audit Action Plan: Ethical Framework and Awareness programme for Officers", presented to the Standards Committee 5 December 2007

Report of the Chief Officer Human Resources, "Ethical Audit Action Plan: Actions of the Chief Officer Human Resources", presented to the Standards Committee 5 December 2007