

ANNEX 2 - Stage 1 detailed audit checklist and action plan

Issue	Audit findings	Conclusion/recommendation	CYC action
3) If the council has town and parish local authorities, has at least one representative been appointed on to the SC?	Only one member from the Parishes. Note: Strengthening the Parish arrangements could be achieved by either issue 3 or 4.	Good practice is for more than one parish council member.	This has been included in the issues to be considered as part of the review of the Constitution.
4) Has the authority established a sub-committee to deal with parish issue?	No sub committee has been established.	Consider setting up a sub-committee to deal with Parish issues.	This has been included in the issues to be considered as part of the review of the Constitution.
12) What mechanisms does the SC have in place to publicise guidance/case rulings published by the Standards Board?	The guidance on individual cases goes to the standards committee. Letters are sent to parish councils where guidance is clearly not understood.	Arrangements seem adequate but there is scope to enhance by providing briefings to members/officers, and by setting up an area on the intranet to locate all standards related documents.	The possibility of an intranet page is being investigated
13) What role does the SC have in the Council? The ODPM guidance suggests that local authorities may arrange for their SC's to exercise further functions according to local choice. These might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overview of internal and external audit; Overview of the whistle blowing policy; Overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations; Review the constitution, making sure it is designed 	Of the areas highlighted the SC is only responsible for protocols for member/officer relationships, and advising the Council on amendments required to the Constitution for ethical matters. The following are all the responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of IA and External Audit Overview of whistle blowing policy Assess reports from Audit Commission Identify risk problems and factors Develop procurement processes The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to maintain an up to date Constitution. There are some areas which are not specifically covered in any Committee's terms	Consider if the SC should be responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> having an overview of the handling of complaints and Ombudsman investigations; and commenting on member's allowances. 	This has been included in the issues to be considered as part of the review of the Constitution.

<p>to reduce the opportunity for misconduct by ensuring decisions of the executive are taken after proper discussion, and making sure processes are accountable to members and the public;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that relations with outside bodies are managed properly; • Assess reports from the Ombudsman and Audit Commission; • Comment on members allowances; • Deal with protocols for members and council employees; • Identify risk problems and risk factors; and Develop procurement procedures. 	<p>of reference within the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations; and • Member allowances – though, again, this may be the responsibility of the full council. 		
<p>14) What does the SC do to promote and maintain a healthy ethical environment in the council and raise standards in the council?</p>	<p>There is a member development programme to raise awareness. The Audit Commission have done some training to members. The SC have considered Nolan and subsequent reports.</p>	<p>SC is proactive in its role but mainly focused on member's standards. Communication of such matters around the council could be enhanced by publicising the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council's values; • complaints procedures; • whistle blowing policy; and • corporate policies. <p>Publicising could be through posters, bulletins, the intranet and training.</p>	<p>This has been included in the issues to be considered as part of the review of the Constitution. In particular, the delegations will be amended to include receipt of reports from the Officer Governance Group on items in their workplan.</p>
<p>16) What training have members received about the</p>	<p>Training has been on hold for 12 months. But there are two new member sessions planned</p>	<p>Training plan needs to be delivered and needs to include the new codes as</p>	<p>Training for members is to take place on 31 October 2007.</p>

code? Is it adequate?	for after the election, and training will incorporate the new code.	planned.	
17) What training have officers received about the code? Is it adequate?	When the new constitution came in sessions where done at all Directorate Management Team, plus Corporate Leadership Group and Corporate Management Team. This covered the code, to some degree, and good decision-making. The council are now waiting for the new Officer Code of Conduct to carry out more training.	Training on the new officer code needs to be planned for delivery promptly after the new code becomes applicable.	The new officer code is unlikely to appear for some considerable time.
18) What does the SC do to help the public, external stakeholders and partners to understand the required standards of behaviour of members?	There is a standing item on all council agendas on interests. Co-opted members have been encouraged to sign up to the Code of conduct (which they have). Arrangements for partners are less clear – work is ongoing around the governance and accountability of partnerships.	It is not clear what role the standards committee has in publicising the required standards of behaviour of all concerned. The council needs to ensure that the required standards of behaviour are effectively communicated to the public, stakeholders and partners.	The standards Committee annual report will go some way to addressing this point.
20) How aware are members and officers about the role and work of the SC?	The Monitoring Officer believes that members are very aware of the role and work of the SC as it directly relates to their behaviours and activities. It is less clear how aware officers are of the work of the SC.	It is possible that only senior officers are aware of the work of the SC. Consider council-wide publicity of the SC.	The intranet will assist this. It is also proposed that a feature is included in a future edition of News in Depth.
27) Has the council ensured that copies of the code are available at an office of the council for inspection by the public at all reasonable hours? Including parishes.	The code was not available at the City Finance Centre. At the Guildhall, a hard copy was not available to view. On request, and after some time, an officer located the Code on the Internet to view. Although the Code is available on the council website it is within the Constitution and as such does not show up on any of the search facilities on the website.	A hard copy of the code should be available for inspection by the public and staff in public offices should be aware of the council's arrangements. The Code should be made more easily accessible on the council website.	Hard copy of the Code is available for inspection by the public and staff in the Guildhall.
28) Has the Council publicised through at least once local	The Code was adopted in 2002. No evidence has been retained to confirm that the council	Evidence of the publicising of the code's adoption could not be produced.	Done

<p>newspaper that the codes has been adopted and that it is available for inspection (including the address of the office)? Including parishes.</p>	<p>did publicise its adoption.</p>	<p>When the new Code is adopted by the Council, this should be publicised, along with the arrangements for public inspection of the code.</p>	
<p>29) Has the council sent a copy of its code to The Standards Board? Including parishes.</p>	<p>The Code was adopted in 2002. No evidence has been retained to confirm that the council did send the Code to the SBE. It is reasonable to assume that the SBE would have reminded the council of the need to do this, if it had failed to do so.</p>	<p>When the new Code is adopted by the council, this should be sent to the SBE as required.</p>	<p>Done</p>
<p>41) Has the SC given any consideration to how it will carry out its duties should it receive a referral back from the Standards Board, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the procedures for determining the outcome of cases referred back from the SBE for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - investigation; and - determination. • The role of the monitoring officer (giving advice. undertaking investigations); • Protocols and procedures for the monitoring officer when conducting investigations ensuring the right to natural justice is maintained, timeliness and time to respond is adhered to; • Avoidance of conflict of 	<p>Evidence suggests that the SC has not given any formal consideration to the points raised, although training sessions on the process of investigations have been provided to SC members. The current recruitment of a Deputy Monitoring Officer will give an opportunity to formalise the approach to referrals from the SBE.</p>	<p>No formal consideration of the points raised has been made. The SC should formally consider, and adopt an approach to carry out its duties on receipt of a referral.</p>	<p>To be put in the Standards Committee workplan.</p>

<p>interest of committee members; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity, equalities, freedom of information, data protection. 			
<p>52) How proactive is the monitoring officer, about ensuring members comply with the code?</p>	<p>The MO issues an annual reminder on registering interests. Also sends all members correspondence in the pre-election period setting out what they can do in that period. An annual report is taken to full council from the SC.</p>	<p>Consider setting up a system to monitor compliance with the new code of conduct.</p>	
<p>63) How clear are the council's protocols on the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member/officer protocols? Use of authority premises? Information technology (including the use of equipment at home)? Telephone and fax? Photocopying? Use of stationery and headed writing paper? Postage? Use of authority transport? Allowances and expenses? 	<p>Member/Office protocol – page 295 of Constitution. Access to info – page 237 of Constitution. Electronic Communication 9IT, telephones etc) – Page 347 of Constitution. Allowances – Page 373 of Constitution. Documents were not located that relate to the use of council transport or the use of stationery items or postage equipment.</p>	<p>Key documents are contained in the Constitution with the exception of policies for the use of stationery and postage and the use of council transport.</p>	<p>This has been included in the issues to be considered as part of the review of the Constitution.</p>
<p>64) How clear are the council's ethical frameworks for procurement, contracting and partnership development? Note that a separate probe is being developed on ethical partnership working.</p>	<p>This is being worked on – arrangements are being strengthened.</p>	<p>Current developments on partnership working should ensure that the council's ethical framework for procurement, contracting and partnership development are up to date and incorporated in appropriate guidance,</p>	
<p>65) Is there an anti-bullying policy? How effective is it?</p>	<p>An anti-bullying policy is in place within the council's HR manual. It is located on the intranet within the HR manual.</p>	<p>As with other important documents in place within the Council, the Bullying policy could not be easily tracked down</p>	

		by searching on the council intranet. A policy does exist but its usefulness is limited by its inaccessibility.	
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