

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2011

### REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER

#### A.1 AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT – ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

(Report prepared by Ken Brown)

#### PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

##### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the Audit Commission's Ethical Governance Report and set out the agreed project plan.

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the review undertaken by the Audit Commission was to provide an external check on ethical governance at the Council. The assessment was undertaken during November 2009 and consisted of focus groups, a confidential survey and a review of key documents such as the Constitution and Standards Committee minutes.

The report contains a short summary of the findings as a result of the survey and individual interviews undertaken. It also contains a project plan which has been agreed with the Audit Commission and which includes actions to be carried out both before and after the District Council elections in May 2011. The actions in the project plan will be the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer and will be reported to and reviewed by this Committee.

The Final Audit Report produced by the Audit Commission is attached as **Appendix A**.

The report and project plan were considered by the Audit Committee at their meeting held on 16 December 2010 (minute 32). The Audit Committee decided:-

“(a) That the Committee accepts the recommendations within the Ethical Governance Report and associated project plan.

(b) That the Committee wishes the Standards Committee to be advised that it recommends that any future matters within its terms of reference be dealt with in a timely manner.”

##### RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the Audit Commission's Ethical Governance Report and associated project plan together with the comments of the Audit Committee.

#### PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

##### DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Corporate Plan sets out that 'we expect all Councillors and staff to uphold and promote the values of personal integrity, honesty and respect for others'.

##### FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**Risk**

If proportionate and practical responses to recommendations made by the Audit Commission are not made then there is the risk that the Council will receive a further qualified judgement by its external Auditors next year and a key opportunity to improve the reputation of the Council will have been missed.

**LEGAL**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report or associated action plan.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below. Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.**

There are no direct implications from the report or associated action plan.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A – Audit Commission Ethical Governance Report**