

Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis  
Matrix of Key Information held by Swindon Borough Council  
March 2007

Appendix 2

	Key Information	Held	Comment:	Possible area of Review to be identified by the Standards Committee
1	Constitutions/ Current Decision Making Framework (ie the committees and sub-committees)	Yes	<p>The Constitution is reviewed and updated at least annually and was last updated August 2006. Its operation is monitored by the Monitoring Officer and also by the Corporate Governance Working Party whose recommendations feed into the review process.</p> <p>The Constitution was considered fit for purpose, up-to-date and well-communicated by the 2004 CGI report, although not well-developed in relation to scrutiny function. The 2006 Corporate Assessment concludes that Scrutiny is now well run and challenging, and contributes to service improvement via a clear role in performance management.</p> <p>An Audit Committee was established in May 2006 and will receive assurances from the Standards Committee in relation to matters of internal control such as the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy.</p> <p>As the Council is increasingly working with external partners and stakeholders, consideration needs to be given as to whether a Code of Conduct applicable to such partnerships should be drawn up. Further, in order to share learning and experiences with our stakeholders and external partners, it may be useful to convene a Standards Conference at which such matters can be explored.</p>	

2	Procedural Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – August 2006	
3	Contracts Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – August 2006	
4	Employees' Code Of Conduct	Yes	Following consultation with Council employees and unions, the Employee Code of Conduct was approved by the Standards Committee in July 2006. The Code of Conduct has been issued to all Council employees, who have been asked to sign to confirm that they have read and will act in accordance with the Code.	
5	Members' Code Of Conduct (Current And New Draft Plus Local Variations) plus Local Guidance	Yes	<p>Adopted by the Council in May 2002 and based on the model code from the Secretary of State. The Standards Board have consulted on a revised Code of Conduct, and the Standards Committee has responded. The Monitoring Officer submitted the comments on the latest revision on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007.</p> <p>A new National Code is anticipated shortly for adoption in time for the new municipal year. The Monitoring Officer will provide guidance and training to Officers and Members as soon as the new Code is adopted.</p>	.
6	Confidential Reporting Procedure	Yes	<p>The Whistleblowing Policy was approved in November 2001. Complaints received are investigated and the outcome reported to the Standards Committee. Employees are reminded about the procedure via staff communications, including in the Core Brief.</p> <p>The Committee approved in September 2005, the renewal of the Council's subscription to the Public Concern at Work Helpline up to January 2009, to provide a formal method of confidential reporting for staff who do not feel able to raise issues directly with the Council.</p> <p>In January 2007 the Committee considered a revised version of the Whistleblowing Policy. The Committee commended the</p>	

			position maintained by the Council of encouraging Officers to come forward and report matters of concern without disadvantaging their position. This was being demonstrated by the fact that all those who had used the policy were employed by the Authority and that two had subsequently received promotion. The revised policy is currently out for consultation and will brought to the Committee for approval shortly.	
7	Terms Of Reference of the Standards Committee	Yes	The Standards Committee has an extended terms of reference, beyond the minimum required by statute, in particular in relation to its monitoring of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Whistleblowing Complaints.	
8	Scheme(s) Of Delegation	Yes	Updated at least annually and last updated August 2006, in particular to include new Council structures and portfolio responsibilities.	
9	Members' Register Of Interests	Yes	Held on file and on the Council's website. Regular reminders are issued. Members can in addition make voluntary declarations in addition to the statutory requirements and these are held on file.	
10	Recorded Declaration Of Interests	Yes	Interests are recorded at meetings and are recorded on the website.	
11	Members' Induction Process	Yes	New councillors are provided with a comprehensive induction programme. Copies of the programme for the Induction Day and Draft Training Programme for May to December 2007 is attached at Annexes A and B as examples.	
12	Officers' Induction Process	Yes	Corporate induction process is in place and departmental induction processes are also in place.  Specific training has been included in the Officers' Induction Process in relation to the ethical framework. It could be useful to check how this is being implemented across departments.	

13	Members' Continuing Development	Yes	<p>A range of development / training opportunities are offered and a record of attendance kept</p> <p>All Councillors have been offered the opportunity to develop Personal Development Plans in order to identify any training and development gaps and to help to develop a Member Training Programme for the year. 34 members have undertaken these to date.</p> <p>The Members Support Officer has developed a new skills and knowledge matrix which has been approved by the Members Development Steering Group. This identifies the various roles of a Councillor, the skills and knowledge needed and the learning and development source. This will be available on the intranet in order that Members can undertake a self-assessment of the training and knowledge gaps and requirements. A printed copy of the document will be made available to all new members on their election to enable them to understand their new roles.</p>	
14	Members' Training	Yes	<p>A range of Training is in place and a record of attendance kept. A copy of the draft training programme for 2007/08 is attached at Annex B.</p> <p>A standard procedure was introduced in January 2005 for Councillors to report back on their attendance at Conferences and External training events via the Members Bulletin.</p>	
15	Officers' Continuing Development	Yes	A competencies based system of annual appraisals is in place across the Council which identifies development needs.	
16	Officers' Training	Yes	A range of Officer training is available, and training needs are identified as part of the appraisal system.	
17	Other Council Specific Additional Codes And Protocols		<u>Monitoring Officer Protocol</u> - Adopted in December 2003 and reviewed by the Committee on 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2005 following	

		<p>consultation with Members. It may be appropriate for this to be adjusted following the introduction of powers for Monitoring Officers to investigate complaints under the Code of Conduct and the Monitoring Officer's role in supporting the local filtering of Standards Board Complaints.</p> <p><u>Guidance to Councillors on Dealing with the Media</u> - adopted February 2002. A revised code was considered by the Committee in October 2006 and is currently subject to consultation with Members.</p> <p><u>Protocol on Member / Officer Relations</u> - Introduced September 2002 and reviewed by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2005 following consultation with Members. The Association of Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) produced a model code, some of which is based on this Council's protocol.</p> <p><u>Members' Planning Code of Good Practice</u> - adopted February 2004, and reviewed by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2005 following consultation with Members. This will need to be reviewed following the introduction of the new Code of Conduct for members.</p> <p><u>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy</u> – adopted November 2001, and investigations are regularly reported to the Standards Committee. In January 2007 the Committee considered a revised version of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy. This is currently out for consultation and will brought to the Committee for approval shortly.</p> <p>A Swindon Internal Audit Services Bulletin is issued to Members and Officers approximately twice a year to promote fraud awareness by communicating information on frauds elsewhere to officers and Members, and enable similar frauds to be prevented.</p>	
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9<sup>th</sup> March 2007