

Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis
Matrix of Key Information held by Swindon Borough Council
October 2008

	Key Information	Held	Current position, including action taken since the last review on 19th March 2008.	Area of Review or Action 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 May 2008. Changes in particular related to the new Council Scrutiny structure, new councillor role definitions, and updated protocols and codes of conduct resulting from the revised Members Code of Conduct. 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 concluded that "Scrutiny is now well run and challenging, and contributes to service improvement via a clear role in performance management". The Council's Use of Resources score for 'conduct and anti-fraud and corruption' was assessed at level 4 (top category - 'well above minimum requirements – performing strongly') in the 2007/08 CPA. An Audit Committee was established in May 2006 and receives 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</p>	

			such partnerships should be drawn up. In order to share learning and experiences with our stakeholders and external partners, the Standards Committee has agreed to hold a Standards Conference during 2008/09 at which such matters can be explored.	
2	Procedural Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – May 2008	
3	Contracts Standing Orders	Yes	Updated in Constitution – May 2008	
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 are required to sign to confirm that they have read and will act in accordance with the Code.	
5	Members' Code Of Conduct plus Local Guidance	Yes	<p>The original Members Code of Conduct was adopted by the Council in May 2002 and a revised Code of Conduct was adopted in May 2007.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has provided guidance and training to Officers and Members, together with Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors, on the new Code.</p>	.
6	Confidential Reporting Procedure	Yes	<p>The Whistleblowing Policy was first approved in November 2001 and revised in July 2007. It is currently being reviewed. 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>	

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 May 2008.	
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 the Training Programme for 2008/09 are attached at Annexes A and B as examples.	
12	Officers' Induction Process	Yes	<p>Corporate induction process is in place and departmental induction processes are also in place.</p> <p>Specific reference has been included in the Officers' Induction Process in relation to the ethical framework. During staff induction it is checked that staff have received a copy of the code of conduct (which they usually have with their contracts) and they are reminded that it is their responsibility to read it and speak with their manager if they have any concerns. Staff are also advised of the disclosure of gifts etc information, and are also advised to contact their managers with any concerns regarding this, or any special arrangements made (for example, working in a care home at Christmas where people may buy them lots of gifts/goodies).</p>	

			<p>It is the responsibility of managers to enforce the code of conduct and ethics and probity issues with staff.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer is liaising with Learning and Development on evaluating the implementation across departments of training on the ethical framework within the Officers' Induction Programme and will report back to the Committee.</p>	
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 undertook these in the first year.</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 is 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 was made available to all new members on their election to enable them to understand their new roles.</p> <p>The skills matrix and new Personal Development Plans will be sent to all Members shortly to carry out a refresh of the current plans. The Member Development Steering Group will receive an update at its next meeting.</p> <p>In relation to specific development needs, a session on</p>	

			chairing skills was included in the Member Development Evening Programme on 9 th July 2008.	
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 2008/09 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> <p>Standards Committee members have been trained in local filtering arrangements; and took part in the pilot as part of their development and preparation for their new role. The members also undertake refresher training whenever the Assessment or Review Sub-Committee or Hearings Panel meets.</p>	
15	Officers' Continuing Development	Yes	A behaviour framework, evaluating the values and behaviours required for the organisation to move forward has just been introduced called "In Touch", which will form part of the annual appraisal in place across the Council. This identifies development needs and provides structured options to accessing appropriate training.	
16	Officers' Training	Yes	A range of Officer training is available, and training needs are identified as part of the appraisal system. The 2008 Council Staff Satisfaction Survey raised specific questions in relation to whistleblowing; understanding of ethical requirements to declare gifts or hospitality or interest in a contract; being treated with respect and fairness; and training requirements	

17	Other Council Specific Additional Codes And Protocols	<p><u>Monitoring Officer Protocol</u> - Adopted in December 2003 and revised by the Committee on 18th April 2005 and January 2008, following consultation with Members. It may be appropriate for this to be further 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, and revised by the Committee in 2006 and January 2008, following consultation with members and other stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Protocol on Member / Officer Relations</u> - Introduced September 2002 and revised by the Committee on 18th April 2005 and January 2008, 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 revised by the Committee on 18th April 2005 and January 2008, following consultation with Members.</p> <p><u>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy</u> – adopted November 2001 and revised by the Committee in July 2007, and investigations are regularly reported to the Standards Committee. This is currently being reviewed and will be 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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