



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED:
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Standards Committee

29 January 2003

STANDARDS 'AUDIT COMMITTEE' ROLE

Report of the Town Clerk

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with further clarification on the proposed 'Audit Role' for the Committee.

2. Summary

2.1. At the meeting of the Committee on 31 October 2002, when considering ways of raising the profile of the Committee, the attention of Members was drawn to the requirement that the Council must regularly review and report upon its arrangements in the area of Corporate Governance, including not only legislative requirements but also the promotion of best practice. Issues of probity, integrity and standards are an integral thread in numerous elements of this Corporate Governance. As part of this Corporate Governance review progress, it was suggested that the Standards Committee fulfil the role of 'Audit Committee for Standards', requiring them to formally sign off the probity and integrity elements of Corporate Governance, having received and examined documentary evidence in support of the Audit view being put forward. Before taking a decision on this matter, the Committee asked for further clarification on the audit role as proposed.

2.2. It is envisaged that a process be developed, for adoption by the Committee, which:-

- (i) Identifies the key risks associated with procedures, relating to ethics, standards and probity and ensures that they are reviewed at least annually.
- (ii) Defines the matters which would provide assurance that those risks are being adequately addressed.
- (iii) Ensure that assurance is provided, through Committee consideration, to an annual cycle.

- (iv) Involves sufficient reality checks on the assurance provided, with evidence.
- (v) Completes the annual cycle to feed into the Corporate Governance Annual Report, which is usually prepared in June/July.

2.3. Key areas which would lend themselves to this approach include:-

- * Political Conventions, including Members Code of Conduct (review, publicity, application)
- * Officers Code of Conduct
- * Register of Members Interests (review/monitoring)
- * Declarations of Interest (Dispensations, monitoring, updating)
- * Registers of Members and Officers Gifts and Hospitality (review)
- * Member training and development (both provision and attendance) on matters of ethical conduct, including training in Development Control matters
- * Member conformance to Data Protection provisions
- * Complaints against Members (monitoring)

2.4. This approach would have particular validity in the immediate future, having regard to the all-out City Council elections on 1 May 2003 and the introduction of new Members to the Council, as well a continuing changes and development to ethical standards and associated Regulations.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider whether they wish to adopt this methodology for a pro-active and systematic auditing of the Council's rules, processes and application of ethical standards and associated regulations.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

Legal implications to follow.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact:

Charles Poole
Service Director (Democratic Services)
extn. 7015