

Audit Commission Report dated June 2008 - 'Setting High Ethical Standards'.

**Appendix 3: Action Plan**

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY	AGREED?	COMMENTS	DATE
<b>Balancing Rules and Trust</b>				
R1 Improve officers' understanding of the Council's ethical approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• through, for example, briefings, training, newsletters and seminars.</li> </ul>	Monitoring Officer	Yes	A comprehensive communications strategy to be established and rolled out over the next six months. Alison Kelly attended the Heads of Service Group Meeting in June 2008. Regular series of articles to appear for staff on line and as part of internal communications	November 2008
R2 Ensure there is a proper integration between the Members' Code of Conduct and Council policies on Disability Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Amendment Act, Human Rights Act and the Freedom of Information Act. This will demonstrate Members' responsibilities in each area.	Monitoring Officer	Yes	A strategy will be developed to understand the issues and determine a work programme.	November 2008
<b>Independent Overview</b>				
R3 Further develop the role of the Standards Committee so that it more actively disseminates information on the high standards of conduct in the Council and promotes understanding of what high ethical standards means and why they are important: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• both within and outside the Council</li> </ul>	Monitoring Officer	Yes	Comprehensive training programme for all Members has been completed (May 2008). A communications plan will now be developed so members of the public know what to expect of their Members. Web based information improved and articles to appear in Hillingdon people to improve accessibility of public to Code of Conduct and processes for making complaints.	November 2008

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R4 Review the constitution of the Standards Committee to ensure it meets best practice guidance and has sufficient capacity to meet its new obligations.	Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	Yes	Constitution was amended at Full Council on 15 May 2008. Processes for a new Ethical Framework agreed by the Standards Committee in June 2008 and reviewed in light of a year of operation.	June 2008
R5 Review the functioning of the Standards, Audit and Scrutiny Committees to ensure all strategic aspects and potential key risks facing the Council are regularly, consistently and coherently reviewed, challenged and scrutinised by the most appropriate committee.	Head of Democratic Services	Yes	Ongoing as part of a continuing review of the operation of the relevant committees and ensure the strategic risks e.g. legal, reputational, financial are considered by the appropriate body. Last reviewed at AGM on 14 May to reflect new legislative requirements such as CCfA and Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Regulations.	November 2008
<b>Leadership</b>				
R6 Enhance consistent strategic support provided for the Standards Committee and the Chairman of the committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the committee has access to the necessary assistance to develop its role in light of on-going national developments and local needs.</li> </ul>	Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services	Yes	Deputy Monitoring Officer appointed March 2008. Training completed for Standards Committee members in respect of the new Ethical Framework. Need to provide for recently appointed members of the Committee	November 2008

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<b>Transparency</b>				
<p>R7 Make the register of Members' interests and gifts and hospitality more easily available to the public. Follow best practice elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review regularly the content of the registers, and review whether Members' and officers' registers are complete.</li> <li>• Publicly report findings.</li> </ul>	Head of Democratic Services	Yes	<p>Action now underway to ensure the register of Members' interests is available on the website and is easily accessible. Web pages being revised with advent of new committee management system and complete individual registers and declarations now available. Audit Committee to receive relevant reports going forward and work towards internal audit judging our arrangements in this area to be good.</p>	November 2008
<p>R8 Demonstrate consistently that the Council encourages open debate – to further enhance public confidence in the Council and the democratic process.</p>	Head of Democratic Services	Yes	<p>Operation &amp; delivery of the constitution specifically with regard to decision making processes to be kept under review to ensure decision making is open and transparent. To ensure the officer/member protocol is observed.</p>	November 2008