

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Title of Report: Ethical Governance Audit – Follow Up

Date: 24 February 2009 – General Purposes Committee
2 March 2009 – Standards Committee

Summary of this Report

This report advises the Committees that the Audit Commission, as part of the 2008/09 Audit Plan are proposing to carry out an Ethical Governance – Review of Progress – Audit further to the audit carried out in 2005/06.

The Committee is asked to endorse the approach to the follow-up audit, as set out in this report.

Recommendations

For General Purposes Committee

1. That the report be noted.
2. That, notwithstanding the terms of reference of the General Purposes Committee in this instance, the Standards Committee be asked to undertake the responsibility for the Ethical Governance Audit and for considering any recommendations arising.

For Standards Committee

1. That the Committee confirm that it is willing to undertake the responsibility for the work associated with the Ethical Governance follow up audit.
2. That consideration be given to the project brief submitted by the Audit Commission, attached as Appendix A, and, in particular, to the audit approach set out paragraph 18 of the brief and the Head of Legal Services be authorised to conclude the arrangements for the audit with the Audit Commission in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

(Note: The Project Brief is not attached to the report submitted to the General Purposes Committee)



City of Westminster

General Purposes Committee Report

Item No:	
Date:	24 February 2009 – General Purposes Committee 2 March 2009 – Standards Committee
Classification:	For General Release
Title of Report:	Ethical Governance Audit – Follow Up
Report of:	Head of Legal Services
Wards involved:	None
Policy context:	High Ethical Standards
Financial summary:	There are no financial implications
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Background Information

- 1.1 The Ethical Governance Audit was originally conducted during 2005/06 and comprised the following:

Interview by Lead Auditor with the Chief Executive;

Detailed questionnaire of the Monitoring Officer;

Interview by Lead Auditor with the Monitoring Officer;

Focus Groups of Officers, led by Lead Auditor;

Focus Group of Members led by Lead Auditor;

Interview by Lead Auditor with the Leader of the Council;

Interview by Lead Auditor with the Leader of the Opposition.

- 1.2 There are 5 audit days set aside for the follow up audit. Following discussions between the Head of Legal Services and the Lead Auditor the audit approach, set out in paragraph 18 of the attached project brief have been prepared for the Committees consideration. It is suggested that following this the Head of Legal Services be authorised to conclude the audit brief. The Head of Legal Services will undertake all the necessary administrative arrangements in respect of the audit.
- 1.3 It is suggested that the Lead Auditor be asked to report the findings to the Council in writing and present them to a future meeting of the Standards Committee to be determined.
- 1.4 In terms of reference of the General Purposes Committee include responsibility for monitoring and implementing the action plan arising from the ACs Ethical Governance Audit. However, in the case of the follow-up audit which is the subject of this report it is proposed that it would be appropriate for the Standards Committee to approve the brief and take responsibility for any follow-up work arising following completion of the audit. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the General Purposes Committee have been consulted and support the proposal.

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications. The cost of the audit is included in the City Council's 2008/09 Audit Plan.

4. Other Implications – none.

If you wish to inspect one of the Background Papers or wish to have further information please contact:

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Background Papers

- Ethical Governance Audit 2005/06