

Wiltshire Council's Vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities, underpinned by 3 key goals:

1. **Deliver high quality, low cost, customer focused services.**
2. **Ensure local, open, honest decision-making.**
3. **Working together to support Wiltshire's communities**

Wiltshire Council Standards Committee Vision is to raise public trust and confidence in local democracy by promoting consistently high standards of conduct throughout local government in Wiltshire

Top Priorities for Action 2010

Standards Committee Goals	Standards Committee Output	Targets	Owner Responsibility	Comments
<p>Promote the ethical well-being of Wiltshire Council by embedding standards further within the Council</p> <p>And</p> <p>Promote standards in partnerships</p>	<p>Work collaboratively with Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees and the Audit Committee in improving the Council's governance arrangements; develop working protocol for inclusion in the Constitution.</p> <p>Undertake review of the effectiveness of the Constitution as requested by Council.</p>	<p>Protocol to be completed for inclusion in Constitution in July 2010.</p> <p>Complete by 30 September 2010.</p>	<p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p> <p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p>	<p>Protocol setting out governance reporting arrangements between Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny, Standards and Audit Committees was approved by Council on 9 November 2010 and is now included in the Constitution..</p> <p>The Council approved the Standards Committee's recommended changes to the Constitution on 9 November 2010 and these came into effect on 1 December 2010. The Constitution Focus Group has been retained to assist on an ongoing basis with any changes that become necessary as a result of the Localism Bill or other new legislation.</p>

	<p>Provide training on the Code of Conduct; monitor take-up and effectiveness of training.</p>	<p>Code of Conduct to be included in the induction process of Officers and Councillors Provide E Training Package by July 2010 100% of Wiltshire Councillors undertaken training on code</p>	<p>Nina Wilton / Vice Chair</p>	<p>No further group training events are planned for Wiltshire Councillors on the Members' Code of Conduct in the light of the proposed changes in the Localism Bill. Advice and support will continue to be given to individual councillors as required and as part of the induction process for new councillors.</p> <p>New Code of Conduct for Officers approved by Council in November and now forms part of Constitution. This will be included in induction arrangements. It also forms part of officers' terms and conditions of employment. All new starters are sent a copy with their offer of employment and required to sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Code. HR now has a facility to generate reports demonstrating where disciplinary investigations arise from a breach of the Code of Conduct and will provide statistics to Head of Governance on a quarterly basis when SAP configuration of this facility has been completed (Summer 2011). This will enable evidence based targeted Code of Conduct training for officers should the evidence show that this is required.</p>
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				With HR advice, we will explore viability of Code of Conduct awareness being linked to appraisal reports.
Work with Parish, Town and City Councils to support them in their application of the local standards framework	Develop training package for Town, Parish and City(T,P&C) Councils in conjunction with WALC; finalise and implement programme for delivery of training; monitor the take-up and effectiveness of training.	Agree content / schedule by 31 July 2010? Begin implementation by 1 September 2010 Monitor effectiveness from 1 November 2010? ? % of T,P&C councils offered training by 1 April 2011	Nina Wilton / Vice Chair	New training package designed to include reference to proposed changes in Localism Bill. Requires regular review to keep abreast of developments in statutory position. Date for first delivery to PCs fixed for April 2011.
	Standards Committee visible presence at meetings of Area Boards.	Standards Committee briefing to all Area Boards by October 2011.	Ian Gibbons / Chair	Briefing note on the implications of the Localism Bill on the current standards regime being provided to Area Boards by way of chairman's announcement, as agreed by the Standards Committee at its last meeting.
Inform and engage the public on standards in local government	Produce leaflet on making a complaint and the local assessment process for distribution throughout Wiltshire.	28 February 2010	Done	Work completed. No further action required.
	Ensure that the Standards Content on the Wiltshire Council Website is easily accessible	30 September 2010	Nina Wilton / Mr. Craig McCallum	Marie Lindsay, Anna Browne and Mr Craig McCallum have developed and refreshed content. Delays resulting from capacity issues with web team Will be posted on web site by June 2011

Chair's overview and summary of identified key trends.

- 1. Following the publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010 the Standards Committee received a report in January on its implications for the standards regime. The Committee has asked the Constitution Focus Group to consider the proposals in the Bill and to report back with its views on these and the adoption of voluntary standards arrangements for Wiltshire Council. This work will continue to be developed as the Bill proceeds through Parliament towards Royal Assent, which is anticipated in Autumn of this year.**
- 2. The Localism Bill contains transitional measures to facilitate the move from the current regime to the new voluntary arrangements. Whilst details are yet to be provided in regulations it seems clear that the Committee will continue to be responsible for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct well into 2012. The actual end date will depend on how many cases remain to be determined after the appointed day, which we anticipate will be fixed between January and April 2012. In the meantime it will remain the Committee's priority to ensure that its statutory responsibilities are discharged efficiently and effectively.**
- 2. Town and Parish Councils have been advised that support and training will continue to be available pending any change in the legislation. This includes advice and support on the changes proposed for these councils in the Localism Bill.**
- 3. The Committee recognises the importance of dealing with complaints in a timely and efficient way. To this end the Committee is actively monitoring progress of cases against the agreed targets. Local assessment sub-committees continue to gain experience in assessing complaints as a consequence of which less complaints are being referred for investigation. The proportion of cases referred for investigation this year is now significantly below the national average. Following the review of process by the Committee in September 2010, steps have been taken as agreed to streamline cases within the requirements of the statutory framework. In particular, retention of the same members for the Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committees has been a positive improvement.**
- 4. The review of the Constitution was completed successfully in November 2010 when the Council agreed the changes recommended by the Standards Committee. These came into effect on 1 December 2010. The Constitution Focus Group, which has been a very effective forum for the review work, is being retained to consider any changes that become necessary as a result of new legislation, including the Localism Bill.**
- 5. The Standards Committee has confirmed its commitment to supporting the Council in the development of its culture change programme. The Council's culture plan is summarised on pages 40-42 of its Business Plan 2011-2015, which was adopted by the Council on 22 February 2011. We will be meeting with the Leader and the Chief Executive to discuss how the Standards Committee can support the Council in promoting the new culture.**

Other Areas for Action

Standard Committee Goals	Standard Committee Output	Targets	Owner Responsibility	Comments								
<p>Apply the local standards framework in a fair, efficient and proportionate manner</p>	<p>Review approach to local assessment to bring decisions more in line with national average of complaints referred for investigation; arrange workshop on local assessment.</p>	<p>Local Assessment Workshop held on 3 February 2010. Review quarterly</p>	<p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p>	<p>Proportion of cases referred for investigation as follows;</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 to date</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overall since April 2009</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> </table> <p>The national average reported in Standards for England's annual report for 2008-09 was 53%. This demonstrates that a more robust approach is being taken by WC Standards Committee at assessment stage on whether a complaint should be referred for investigation.</p>	2009	41%	2010	12%	2011 to date	0%	Overall since April 2009	27%
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<p>Consider outcome of Standards for England's review on proportionality in local standards framework; review proportionality in the operation of the Council's own procedures including the use of mediation and informal resolution of complaints.</p>	<p>Report on review to meeting on 22 September 2010</p>	<p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p>	<p>Recommendations for streamlining process agreed by Standards Committee at meeting on 22 September 2010 and have been implemented.</p>									

	<p>Review timescales for completing each stage of the local assessment process.</p> <p>Implement new Code of Conduct with training for all councillors.</p>	<p>Completed. Initial assessment within 20 working days of receipt of complaint. Review decision within 20 working days of request for review. All investigations to be completed within 6 months of complaint reaching the Assessment Sub-Committee's (or if appropriate the Review Sub-Committee's) Decision. Subsequent Standards Committee hearings to be completed within 12 weeks of receipt of Investigator's Report.</p> <p>Await Government's proposals.</p>	Ian Gibbons / Chair	<p>Completed. Target timescales agreed with progress monitored by Standards Committee at each meeting using 'traffic light' system.</p> <p>Superseded by Localism Bill.</p>
<p>Promote the ethical well-being of Wiltshire Council by embedding standards further within the Council</p>	<p>Support the Council in moving to a single culture by promoting agreed values.</p>	<p>To be developed in consultation with the Chief Executive and Cllr Laura Mayes, Wiltshire Council's Portfolio holder for Culture Change</p>	Ian Gibbons / Chair	<p>The Council's Business Plan 2011-2015 summarises its culture plan (at pages 40-42). Core values have been developed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - placing our customers first - strengthening our communities - adopting a 'can-do' approach in everything we do. <p>The Monitoring Officer and Chairman of the Standards Committee will meet with the Leader and Chief Executive to discuss how the Committee can support the Council in promoting its culture.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <p>Promote standards in partnerships</p>	<p>Increase the Committee's visibility by attendance at meetings of Council, Cabinet, Committees and Area Boards.</p>	<p>Chairman or Vice Chairman to attend Council Meetings (6 per year) Chairman or Vice Chairman to attend 50% of Cabinet Meetings Standards Committee representation at all Area Boards at least once a year</p>	<p>Chair</p>	<p>Chairman and Vice Chairman attending meetings of Cabinet and Council. Members encouraged to attend especially where business is directly relevant to Standards Committee.</p>
	<p>Arrange regular meetings between the Chairman of the Standards Committee, Monitoring Officer, Leader and Chief Executive to maintain contact and exchange areas of development and opportunities.</p>	<p>Quarterly.</p>	<p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p>	<p>Further meetings to be arranged.</p>
	<p>Oversight of the Council's complaints handling to ensure that complaints are dealt with efficiently and lead to improvements in services to the public.</p>	<p>Annual statistical return to be considered by the Committee.</p>	<p>Nina Wilton / Chair</p>	<p>Dependent on the development of a complaints tracking system. Complaints organisational structure to be reviewed.</p>
	<p>Review partnership governance arrangements; incorporate agreed values and standards of behaviour in partnership documentation</p>	<p>Timetable for review to be agreed.</p>	<p>Ian Gibbons / Chair</p>	<p>The existing Partnership Protocol and Register has been reviewed and updated to ensure that all partnerships across Wiltshire Council are captured. The revised protocol will ensure that partnerships are underpinned by good governance and to complement the protocol a new electronic database and</p>

				<p>supporting guidance have been developed and implemented.</p> <p>Work plan for incorporating agreed values and standards of behaviour in partnership documentation is to be agreed.</p>
<p>Work with Parish, Town and City Councils to support them in their application of the local standards framework</p>	<p>Communicate regularly with Town, Parish and City Councils on standards issues e.g. through Parish newsletter</p>	<p>Articles in Parish newsletters as required. Provide annual digest of code of conduct cases</p>	<p>Nina Wilton / Chair</p>	<p>We will continue to use existing channels of communication to support town and parish councils under the current regime and with the changes proposed in the Localism Bill. The Constitution Focus Group has recommended a training event for town and parish councils on the changes in the Localism Bill that will affect them generally to be arranged when the details are clear.</p>