

STANDARDS TRAINING SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the SPECIAL MEETING of the STANDARDS TRAINING SUB-COMMITTEE held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2009.

PRESENT:

Independent Members	-	Mr Philip Gill Mr Gerry Robson
Town/Parish Members	-	Mr Alexander McCallum Mr Robert Oglesby
Wiltshire Council Member	-	Cllr Nigel Carter

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Miss P Turner, Chairman of the Standards Communication Sub-Committee and Miss K Fielding of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

2. Declarations of Interests

No declaration of interest were received

3. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had attended the Standard Communications Sub-Committee meeting on 7 December 2009 where the roles, and future, of the Communications and Training Sub-Committees had been discussed.

The Chairman explained that Nina Wilton, Head of Governance, had also attended and invited her to share her views and opinions throughout the verbal update he would give the Committee.

4. Public Participation

There were no requests from members of the public to speak.

5. Communications Sub-Committee

The roles of the Communication and Training Sub-Committees were discussed at the 7 December meeting of the Communication Sub-Committee following concerns expressed at the 11 November meeting of the Standards Committee regarding a possible overlap.

The Chairman gave a verbal summary of the debate that took place;

- That the Terms of Reference for both Sub-Committees should probably be more “task oriented” and that at present they were not clear enough
- That the role of each Sub-Committee required clarification as at least two items were on the Communications Sub-Committee work plan which related to training (I. Creation of a ‘mobile’, standardised presentation pack on the Code of Conduct for Members, which can be given by members and officers and N. Further training on the Code of Conduct for Members)
- Different options regarding the future of the two sub-committees were discussed and the one the Communications Sub-Committee expressed a preference for was as follows:
To establish some Task and Finish Groups on an ad-hoc basis to carry out a task on behalf of the Standards Committee.

The Chairman expressed his personal support for the option proposed above but opened it for debate and asked the Committee to make a decision to be reported to the Standards Committee at its 13 January meeting. Nina Wilton would write a joint report from the Communications and the Training Sub-Committees to be presented to the Standards Committee.

Resolved:

The Training Sub-Committee agreed that the Task and Finish Groups could address the issues around overlap and lack of clarity of roles and Terms of Reference, and could prove a more effective approach. However they wished to see the following issues addressed or integrated:

- **The membership of the Task and Finish Groups; flexibility would be required and clear numbers would need to be established either as a set rule or depending on the task undertaken. Adequate recording of everyone’s skills and abilities would be required to ensure that the membership of each Task and Finish Group was the most effective.**
- **That all reports and / or agenda items should include training needs in their impact analysis; this would be necessary to maintain an accurate Training Strategy as well as support Wiltshire Council’s commitment and focus on training with a view to obtain Charter Status.**
- **That any Task and Finish Groups considering Training issues should consider working closely with the**

Councillors Development Group to avoid duplication of work and effort.

7. Terms of Reference of the Training Sub-Committee.

All agreed that as the decision had been taken to support the disbandment of the Communications and Training Sub-Committees to be replaced by ad-hoc Task and Finish Groups there was no need to discuss the Terms of Reference.

Instead the Training Sub-Committee wished to clarify some issues the Standards Committee would need to consider in the near future and to receive an update of some of the projects they had previously considered:

(1) Town and Parish Councils training on Code of Conduct
Progress was being made and work undertaken with WALC to address issues around understanding the roles of Councillors, of Clerks and of Council as a whole. The presentation would mostly seek to address the following: procedural questions and complaints, lack of understanding of Freedom of Information and recurring themes (Respect, Bullying, Intimidation, Disrepute, Personal and Prejudicial Interests). The powerpoint presentation was circulated.

It was hoped that the training could be rolled out early spring as currently hearings had to take priority. It was also noted that not all Town and Parish Councils are members of WALC and some adjustments would have to be made.

Resolved:

- (a) to endorse the aims and objectives of the training
- (b) to recommend for the parishes of Charlton and Hankerton to be considered to pilot test the training
- (c) to receive the links to the papers supporting the slides as Cllr N Carter, Mr P Gill and Mr G Robson volunteered to help deliver the training

(2) E-training on Code of Conduct

The training should be rolled out in January and it was suggested that it could be introduced by the new Chief Executive if possible.

Members of the Training Sub-Committee asked to be sent link to the training before it was rolled out.

(2) Evaluation of success and recording of training

The Training Sub-Committee recommended that the Standards Committee consider how it wished to record the success of the training offered and undertaken. The Committee had also previously considered whether "certificates" should be delivered to those attending the training, detailing the aims and objectives of the training received.

(3) Training Needs identified to help with recurring complaints

- Chairmanship skills
- Mediation skills
- conflict management skills

(4) Training Sub-Committee's Work Plan

It was agreed that an updated Work Plan would be presented to the Standards Committee to ensure the Standards Committee was aware of all the issues identified by the Training Sub-Committee.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00pm – 3.20pm)

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