

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2010

STANDARDS COMMITTEE PLAN 2010-2014

Purpose of Report

1. To ask the Committee:
 - 1.1 to note the work in progress in developing suitable targets for evaluating performance against the actions set out in the Committee's Plan;
 - 1.2 to set up a task and finish group to prepare a presentation to make to the Council's 18 area boards promoting the role of the Standards Committee and the local standards framework;
 - 1.3 to agree a programme of events to inform and engage the public on standards in local government.

Background

2. At its meeting on 3 February 2010 the Standards Committee agreed a plan setting out its vision, goals and actions for 2010-2014. The plan was agreed, subject to some modifications, including the development of targets for evaluating performance against the plan.
3. It was agreed that Mr McGill would work with the Monitoring Officer to develop a method for evaluating the performance of the Committee in delivering its goals.

Main Considerations for the Council

Revisions to the Plan - Work in Progress

4. Following initial consultations between the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Mr McGill some revisions have been made to the plan, as shown in appendix 1 to this report. These provide a new lay-out for the plan, incorporating the Council's vision and goals and those of the Standards Committee. They also include some provisional targets to enable the Committee to evaluate performance against the outputs specified in the plan.
5. This is work in progress and further work will be undertaken to finalise the targets. The final version will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

Presentations to Area Boards

6. The Committee has agreed to increase its visibility by attendance at meetings of Council, Cabinet, Committees and Area Boards. This is in support of the second goal of promoting the well-being of Wiltshire Council by embedding standards further within the Council. Some performance indicators have been suggested for this purpose as set out in the appendix.
7. The development of area boards as a key part of local decision making is central to the Council's vision of creating stronger and more resilient communities. It is appropriate for the Standards Committee to support the Council in the development of area boards by promoting high standards of conduct and public confidence in their operation.
8. It is proposed that the Committee undertakes a programme of briefings to the 18 area boards in Wiltshire promoting the work of the Standards Committee and the importance of standards in local government. To this end it is proposed that a task and finish group is established to prepare a suitable presentation, including a DVD and other supporting materials for this purpose.
9. It is suggested that the task group should report to the July meeting with a draft presentation and materials for approval by the Committee. Briefings to area boards would then commence during the Autumn of this year.

Informing and Engaging the Public - Programme of Events

10. The programme of presentations to Area Boards proposed above will provide a good platform for the Committee to inform and engage the public on standards in local government. Area boards are well attended by members of the public, parish and town council representatives and partner agencies. This forum will provide a useful opportunity to provide a clear and consistent message on the importance of standards and transparency in local democracy.
11. Consideration will be given to taking part in other suitable events as and when they arise.

Environmental Impact

8. None.

Equalities Impact

9. The plan is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Financial Implications

10. There are none arising directly from this report. There will be costs associated with the implementation of the proposed plan e.g. training, printing costs. These will be met from within existing resources.

Legal Implications

11. Implementation of the plan will enable the Committee to discharge its legal responsibilities more effectively.

Proposal

12. The Committee is, therefore, asked to:

12.1 note the work in progress in developing the plan, including targets for evaluating performance against the outputs specified in the plan;

12.2 to set up a task and finish group to prepare a presentation and supporting materials to make to the Council's 18 area boards promoting the role of the Standards Committee and the local standards framework;

12.3 to ask the task group to report back to the Committee at its July meeting with its proposals with a view to commencing the programme of briefings to area boards in the Autumn term.

Reason for Proposal

13. To develop the Committee's plan to ensure that it enables the Committee to discharge its role and responsibilities more effectively and the Committee is able to review its performance against the plan.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: None

Appendix

Proposed revisions to the Plan