

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 10 March 2009

Report of: Nigel Briers, Chairman of the Committee and Working Group and Members of the Working Group - David Sayer, Patsy Barnett, Roger Pomlett Cllr John Goddard

Title: Promoting the work of the Standards Committee

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide feedback on the first meeting of the Working Group of Standards Committee set up to discuss ways and means of promoting the work and function of the Committee and to investigate suitable media whereby such promotional material can be communicated to both Members and to the general public.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To note and approve the proposals of the Working Group to continue working on ways to promote the Committee.

3.0 Information

The Group, following its formulation at the conclusion of the Shadow Committee's meeting on the 25th November 2008, now met to discuss ways and means of promoting the work and function of the Standards Committee and to consider suitable media whereby such promotional material can be communicated not only to Members but to the public at large.

3.1 Broad Strategy

Roger Pomlett advised the Group of the steps being taken by the Cheshire East Council ("the Council") to promote public awareness of the newly formed authority and how it will affect the population within its sphere of authority. In particular it was felt that the Standards

Committee could conveniently liaise with the Council in this regard and illustrate for the benefit of those unaware of the Standards Committee and its purpose just where it fits in and how it operates. Regard should be had for any regular publication to be issued by or on behalf of the Council in order that the Standards Committee might contribute.

It was unanimously agreed that this presented an opportunity not to be missed and Nigel Briers suggested that it would be appropriate for an internal meeting to be arranged with the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Council with representatives of the Group in order to pursue this line of approach.

3.2 Specific Issues

The Group was unanimous that a leaflet should be drafted and prepared for wide distribution and availability throughout the area of the authority and that such leaflet would explain the role of the Committee and its terms of reference and constitution. The need to maintain a careful balance between the dissemination of information on the one hand and guidance for potential complainants on the other in a plain language document was stressed.

Means of distribution were discussed and considered e.g. Council tax demands, parish/town council newsletters and the like. Patsy Barnett provided helpful information relating to the Cheshire Association of Parish Councillors and the training undertaken by parish clerks. Recent DVDs available to illustrate working examples of the Code of Conduct in practice should be particularly brought to the attention of those involved with parishes of which there are 108 in the administrative area of the newly constituted authority.

At the next meeting of the Committee on 10th March 2009 approval in principle to be sought for the proposed leaflet which the Group accepted would be likely to have to be produced internally i.e. by the Group.

3.2 Conclusion

It was agreed that the meeting and discussion had been useful and Nigel Briers suggested that the Group should remain in existence and thereby retain the initiative in terms of the suggestions made and promotions envisaged. Accordingly it was agreed that the Group would reconvene after the meeting of the Committee on the 10th March 2009 specifically to compile the form and content of the proposed leaflet.

4.1 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

4.1 None

5.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

5.1 To be determined at a later date, possibly costs of promotional material.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 N/A

7.0 Risk Assessment

7.1 N/A

8.0 Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues

8.1 N/A

For further information:

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Background Documents:

None