

# **Serious About Standards**

## **Draft Communications Strategy and Action Plan**

### **Aims**

- To raise the profile of the Ethical Governance agenda and the work of the Standards Committee internally and externally.
- To improve understanding amongst Officers and Members as to the importance of Ethical Governance.
- To explain to the public what the Council does to ensure it is governing ethically.

### **Key Objectives**

- To communicate clear and consistent key messages highlighting the council's commitment to being an ethical organisation by ensuring that councillors uphold their civic responsibilities and conduct their business in an ethical manner.
- To clarify the roles of councillors – including what they can and cannot do – to ensure greater understanding by councillors, staff, local residents, stakeholder and partners and ultimately enhancing public perception.
- To raise the profile of the role of councillors and promote the important contribution they make to the local community, reinforcing the importance of ethics to councillors, and influencing their position as community leaders to the general public.
- To launch a communications and consultation plan to external audiences utilising various information channels providing local people with opportunities to be more informed and involved.
- To encourage 'whistleblowing' of unethical behaviour where appropriate

## Serious About Standards Action Plan

### INTERNAL FOCUS

#### Outcomes

- Improved internal awareness of standards issues
- Role of the Standards Committee promoted
- Improved understanding amongst Officers and Members as to the importance of Ethical Governance
- Clear and consistent key messages highlighting the council's commitment to being an ethical organisation
- Greater understanding of the role of Councillors and Officers
- Greater understanding of the role of the Standards Committee
- Greater understanding of the Code of Conduct
- Greater understanding of partnerships and members interests

Action	Responsibility	Progress Update
Standards Quiz circulated to Councillors and Officers (results reported to Standards Committee)	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Issue Standards Committee Bulletin to all Councillors and Managers	Monitoring Officer	
Include regular items on ethical issues in the Team Brief	Communications Manager	
Article in Grapevine including Interviews with the Monitoring Officer and independent Members of the Standards Committee	Communications Manager	
Standards Committee Annual Report to Full Council	Chair of the Standards	
Broadcast emails	Communications Manager	
Internal notice boards	Committee and Member Services Manager	

**INTERNAL FOCUS continued**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Progress Updates</b>
Create pages on the Council's intranet BLOG on standards issues	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Mid year review of Local Code of Corporate Governance jointly with Overview and Scrutiny in September/October	Monitoring Officer	
Communicate Monitoring Officer Protocol	Monitoring Officer	Issued via Standards Bulletin
Section included in the Council's induction programme for Officers	Head of People and Policy	
Ethical governance training for members and officer	Monitoring Officer	
Monitoring Officer to hold one-to-one awareness raising session with any newly elected Members.	Monitoring Officer	
Councillors and Independent Chair of the Standards Committee to attend Team Meetings	Committee and Member Services Manager	

## EXTERNAL FOCUS

### Outcomes

- Improved understanding amongst the public, local communities and stakeholders about what the Council does to ensure it is governing ethically
- Clear and consistent key messages highlighting the council's commitment to being an ethical organisation
- Profile of the role of councillors promoted
- Improved understanding of whistle blowing practices amongst contractors
- Agreed set of standards with entering into contracts e.g. Whistle Blowing Policy

Action	Responsibility	Progress Update
Standards Quiz circulated to partners	Service Assurance Team Manager / Communities Manager	
Issue Standards Committee Bulletin on website, at the One Stop Shop, Libraries	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Articles in the Rossendale Alive publication	Communications Manager	
Standards Committee Annual Report sent to the Standards Board for England	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Whistle Blowing Policy communicated through the procurement process for any contracts	Assistant Head of Legal	
Ensure "corporate governance" section of website is regularly reviewed	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Publish regular "key messages" on the website	Committee and Member Services Manager	
Publish regular "key messages" on the plasma tv in the one stop shop	Committee and Member Services Manager / Service Assurance Team Manager	
Produce Standards leaflet for external distribution in community venues, doctors' surgeries, libraries and	Committee and Member Services Manager	

all partners		
All contractors and partners to complete a declaration of interests form and partners	Assistant Head of Legal	
Update to Whistle Blowing Policy to consider that Contractors sign up to the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy	Assistant Head of Legal	
Review of partnerships and governance arrangements. Joint work with Overview and Scrutiny	Monitoring Officer and the Communities Manager	
Standards BLOG on website to communicate the work of the Committee	Chair of Standards Committee and Member Services Manager	
Actively promote local complaints process through the Rossendale Alive newsletter and the Town Council's Whitworth News booklet	Committee and Member Services Manager Clerk to Whitworth Town Council	