

Agenda Item No.

TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE: 4th August 2009
SUBJECT: KEY LINE OF ENQUIRY 2.3
BY: CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The report presents a proposal for consideration in relation to the communication issues identified at the last meeting of the Committee when it considered this matter. I have been in discussion with Tessa Hallet from Swale's media and Communications Team and she has prepared the proposal attached to the report for discussion.

The aim is to address both issues raised in the Key Line of Enquiry and to put in place actions which reflect some of the best practice identified as a result of the establishment of the Local Government Chronicle Standards and Ethics Award.

Implications: Human Resources Implications: within existing resources

Finance Implications: not applicable

Legal Implications: good governance minimises the potential for legal challenge and referrals under the Code of Conduct

Crime & Disorder Implications (Section 17): not applicable

Equalities & Diversity Implications: not applicable.

Sustainability Implications: Not applicable

Risk and Health and Safety Implications: Not applicable

Corporate Plan Implications: ***High performing organisation – corporate governance.***

Decision Required: **Members are asked to consider the proposal as a discussion document and to agree actions to improve communication with staff and stakeholders.**

Introduction/Background

1. At the last meeting Members considered the Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry relating to governance. This forms part of the Use of Resources. I was tasked with considering various communication related aspects.
2. I have discussed this with the Council's Communications Manager and she has provided the attached proposal (Annex A) as a proposal for

discussion. In considering a way forward we agreed that it was important that we addressed issues of public perception and also to demonstrate how the work of the Standards Committee can provide public assurance that standards are being maintained and improved.

3. We felt the key messages to concentrate on were:

- Local democracy in Swale is open and our councillors are accountable
- We have systems in place to maintain our standards and help you hold us to account.

4. The Action Plan sets out a number of promotional opportunities for consideration.

Recommendation

5. Members are asked to consider the proposal as a discussion document and to agree actions to improve communication with staff and stakeholders

Reason for Recommendation

Members have already expressed a wish to improve communication with staff and stakeholders.

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Date: 3rd July 2009