

Meeting **REGIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date **TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2010 – 2.00 p.m.**

Report of **CHIEF EXECUTIVE LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY**

Subject **ETHICAL GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT**

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an opportunity to discuss another element of the ethical governance toolkit available by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) website.

Commentary

2. On 1 October 2009 this Committee agreed to consider parts of the Ethical Governance Toolkit produced by the IDeA and the Audit Commission with the support of Standards for England. This is available on the IDeA website www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge.
3. On 4 February 2010 the Committee discussed leadership behaviour and styles element of toolkit. On this occasion members are invited to discuss the accountability element.
4. Members will see the language of the toolkit is directed a “councils” so some care is needed utilising this for a Police Authority. In particular, in a council the Chief Executive will often be a different person to the monitoring officer.
5. As members will have seen on a previous occasion the toolkit comprises four main elements, which are discrete but can be used together in a variety of permutations. The topics in the toolkit include
 - Leadership, behaviour and styles
 - Communications
 - Relationships
 - Accountability
 - Management of standards
 - Team-working and co-operation
6. The question probes and features relating to the accountability head are found at **Annex A** to this report.
7. It is suggested that during the discussion of this report members address in turn each of the questions at Appendix 1 taking into account the descriptions of an ideal authority and a negative authority. Which of the sentences there characterises our police authority? This discussion should provide suggestions to drive improvements.

Recommendation

8. Members are invited to discuss the report.

Implications

Financial: none. Legal: none. Diversity: none. Risk Management: none.

Background Papers

None.

Officer to Contact

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QUESTIONS AND PROBES

ACCOUNTABILITY	
1	Do you think that by their behaviour the majority of members and officers display an understanding of the importance of ethical standards in this council? Can you give examples?
2	Do you think there is a common understanding for members of the ethical values of this council? Can you give examples?
3	Do you think there is a common understanding for officers of the ethical values of this council? Can you give examples?
4	Do you think that the appointment of representatives of the council to outside bodies is carried out in an open and transparent manner? Can you give examples?
5	To what extent do non executive members feel they can hold the executive to be accountable?
6	To what extent do members and officers understand the need for a register of interests?
7	To what extent do members of the public understand who is responsible for what in the council?
8	Do you think that the use of 'exempt information' is constructive or is it used to shield and hide debate?
9	Does the council maximise the opportunity to hold meetings in publicly accessible venues e.g. away from the guildhall? Can you give examples?
10	To what extent do members understand the roles of the statutory officers and know who they are?
11	Do you think that senior officers are accountable for the decisions they take? Can you give examples?
KEY POSITIVE FEATURES OF AN IDEAL AUTHORITY	
1	Show commitment to seeing problems through to the end.
2	Deal promptly with the major issues and problems that span the council.
3	Give a free rein to people where appropriate to resolve problems without interference, while offering appropriate support where necessary.
4	Ensure that teams and individuals understand the parameters in which they make decisions and are accountable for these.
5	Evaluate arguments according to evidence, making independent and impartial judgements based on sound rationale, evidence, good judgement and pragmatism but within the context of political beliefs.
6	Are confident enough to change a decision which feedback demonstrates is not effective.
7	Spend time and effort making sure they understand the implications and potential impact of a decision.
8	Display well-founded confidence and trust in others' judgement and decision-making.
9	Actively represent political group or service team views and values through decisions and actions.
KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES OF AN AUTHORITY	
1	Keep a low profile, being invisible throughout the council, particularly at times of adversity.
2	Delegate inappropriately and blame subordinates or use others as scapegoats when things go wrong.
3	Invoke inappropriate use of the 'exempt information' provisions to restrict access to debate and decision making.
4	Make decisions without taking advice or considering regulations and wide development frameworks.
5	Fail to review their decisions on the basis of experience and to change them where necessary – e.g. saying "I've made my mind up and that is final".
6	Operate in secret and fail to open processes and decision-making to others.