

Service Improvement Plan (*abridged*) - 2009/ 2012

Law and Democracy

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Theme: Stronger Communities		
DLD 1 Development Priority: Improve Corporate and Ethical Governance		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<p>Improve standards and probity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop the profile of the Standards Committee and its work • Review and refresh the provision of training and information on standards and ethics (including the Code of Conduct) to Town and Parish Councils • Provide ongoing training and guidance for Members (including co-opted members) and Officers in connection with the proposed new Member Code of Conduct. • Provide information and guidance to employees regarding the proposed new employee code of conduct 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness and understanding of the ethical framework • Improved awareness and understanding of the proposed new Member Code of Conduct • Improved awareness and understanding of the proposed employee code of conduct
<p>Develop the enhanced Standards Committee Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide training and guidance on the Standards Committee's new role for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standards Committee Members ○ Officers ○ Non-Committee Members; and ○ Town/Parish Councils • Work with the other Tees Valley Local Authorities to co-ordinate and implement a development programme for the Tees Valley Standards Committees. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and guidance provided for the Standards Committee, Officers, non-Committee Members and Town/Parish Councils regarding the revised/new procedures and the Committee's enhanced role. • Increased awareness of the Committee's enhanced role amongst Officers, Members and Town/Parish Councils. • Improved understanding and awareness of the Standards Committees and their individual members regarding the ethical framework and their roles within it.

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Introduce new Executive Arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce draft proposals regarding the form of executive proposed, including details of appropriate revisions/additions to the Constitution• Submit the proposals for change for consideration and approval by Cabinet and full Council• Implement the approved proposals	April 2010 December 2010 May2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New executive arrangements introduced in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requirements• Members, Officers and the public made aware of the new, approved executive arrangements
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Theme: Community Strategy Stronger Communities/Organisational and Operational Effectiveness		
D1 Development Priority: To review the Council's scrutiny arrangements taking into account legislative changes		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce arrangements with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) (when constituted) to determine health scrutiny review topics. • Strengthen links with external partners and agree arrangements to input into selection of scrutiny topics. • Develop process to deal with Calls for Action (CFA). • Deliver member training on new scrutiny requirements and CFA. • Develop scrutiny process to accommodate review of LAA outcomes. • Support the delivery of the Council's Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2010 Dec 2010 Dec 2010 Dec 2010 Dec 2010 Mar 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet requirements of legislation (Police and Justice Act, LGPIHA, LDEDC Bill) • Increased external scrutiny of key public bodies • Improved public accountability of key public bodies • Establish process for checking CFA • Services are appropriate to meet future demands

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Theme: Community Strategy Stronger Communities		
D2 Development Priority: Implement the Electoral Services Performance Standards Framework		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<p><u>Integrity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate sources of information to verify records on the register of electors and identify potential new electors. • Use all appropriate sources of information available to ensure all relevant properties are included in the property database. • Ensure that all necessary house-to-house enquiries are undertaken to ensure that all eligible residents are registered as detailed in Sections 9A and 10(5) of the RPA 1983 in accordance with Electoral Canvass Strategy • Ensure that there is a process in place to identify any patterns of activity that might indicate electoral malpractice. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>December 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Electors can expect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to know information about them is accurate and to be clear how it is used • their vote is confidential and they can make it free from pressure • to know their vote is counted. <p>Candidates and parties can expect:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processes which are transparent and checked • accurate results <p>EC Performance Standard 1: Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors.</p> <p>EC Performance Standard 2: Maintaining the property database.</p> <p>EC Performance Standard 3: House-to-house enquiries.</p> <p>EC Performance Standard 4: Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications.</p>

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Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<p><u>User Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an effective and appropriate public awareness strategy is developed and maintained to comply with the new duty to promote democracy. • Research the merits of working with appropriate partners and work with them where appropriate to promote electoral participation. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Electors can expect:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a voting process that is easy to understand • to have a choice of ways to vote • to be able to vote in a way that suits their lifestyle and needs • information and advice which is accurate, prompt and easy to understand <p>Candidates and parties can expect:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to know how to stand for election • consistency of approach and realistic timescales • clarity and impartiality in the process <p>EC Performance Standard 6: Public awareness strategy EC Performance Standard 7: Working with partners EC Performance Standard 8: Accessibility and communication of information</p>

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Theme: Community Strategy Stronger Communities		
D3 Development Priority: Implement the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<p><u>Duties relating to promotion of Democracy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret guidance arising from the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill (LDEC Bill) and respond to any duty introduced to promote democracy • Arising from the LDEC Bill to promote understanding among local people of the functions, democratic arrangements and opportunities for public participation in the authorities connected with the principal local authority; including Parish/Town Councils, Police & Fire Authorities, PCT, Probation Board, functions of a Lay Justice etc. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved targeting of Community Engagement Strategy towards most need as evidenced through the numbers and identity of groups participating. • Increased awareness amongst general public of opportunities to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ become active in their own community ○ have access to information ○ have an influence ○ be able to challenge ○ seek redress ○ stand for office ○ own and run local services <p>as evidenced by public response to the information made available.</p> • Easily understood information made readily available leading to an increased awareness and participation in democratic engagement

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Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<p><u>Petitions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Council's arrangements for responding to petitions in the light of a new duty to respond being introduced. • Prepare a draft scheme, to be approved by Council, for handling petitions taking account of possible provisions in future legislation. • Identify a facility whereby petitions may be submitted to the Council on line. • Make arrangements to publish the Council's petition scheme. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved response to petitions received with identifiable action carried out highlighted.

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Theme: Community Strategy Stronger Communities		
D4 Development Priority: Develop a Members' Charter that maximises the capacity of elected Members		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare existing member support arrangements against the LGIU 12 Point Manifesto for Councils and regional best practice initiatives led by North East Connects and produce appropriate Members' Charter. Identify and deliver required member learning and support requirements. 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Member capacity Increased public awareness of role of Elected Members. Improved communications methods. Increased public awareness of opportunities to serve the local community.

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Theme: Performance and Resource Management		
L1 Development Priority: Implementation of EU Remedies Directive (2007/66/EC)		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
Provide training on the implications of the EU Remedies Directive.	December 2009	All key staff undertaking procurement are aware of the implications of legislative changes.
Review and where required amend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to take account of the EU Remedies Directive.	December 2009	Contract Procedure Rules are compliant with the procurement process changes to be introduced by the EU Remedies Directive

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Theme: Performance and Resource Management		
L2 Development Priority: Case Management		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
Complete Tricostar integration with Outlook	January 2009	Tricostar will be the dominant system and all mail will be stored electronically against each case.
Implement Court Bundling	March 2009	Court bundles will be electronic, pagination will be automatic and printing costs will be reduced.
Review current records storage and ensure compliance with retention procedures.	December 2009	Compliance with data protection principles and improved storage facilities.
Introduce work flow (key attributes) for each procedural work type.	March 2010	Improved efficiency and performance and consistent quality standards.
Continue to improve performance management information, carry out file audits and produce monthly reports	September 2009	Improved performance and monitoring of standards and response times.

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Theme: Children and Young People (Enjoy and Achieve)		
L3 Development Priority: Building Schools for the Future		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and Success Criteria
Delivery of Academies via BSF including certificates of title; draft transfer, Funding, Development, Lease and Design and Build contracts for PfS approval at Outline Business Case	April 2009	PfS approval of OBC and Funding Agreement (between DCSF and Sponsor)
To complete BSF Legal work for submission of Outline Business case including PfS approvals to any derogations and draft Design and Build Contracts; ICT Contract; FM Contract; LEP documentation (Shareholders Agreement and Strategic Partnering Agreement)	April 2009	PfS approval
Procurement process for BSF (including Academies via the LEP) including : Commence procurement Select Final Bidder Financial Close	August 2009 August 2010 January 2011	Successful and compliant procurement process