

Cabinet – 12th July, 2005

Report of the Director of Law and Property

Corporate Format of Reports

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a revised corporate format for reports and to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution.

Background

Corporate Report Format

2. The Council adopts a corporate format for Committee reports, including a list of standard "implications" paragraphs that all report authors should consider. The requirement to consider these key corporate issues applies equally to the production of Decision Sheets. Recently, a number of variations to the corporate template have been observed in reports to Committees.
3. With the roll-out of the Committee Management Information System (CMIS), documents associated with the Council's decision-making process are increasingly being made publicly available on the Internet. The adoption of the revised corporate report format will help us to:-
 - Give a consistent service to everyone involved in the decision making process;
 - Take account of key priorities and important corporate issues/implications in all reports and Decision Sheets;
 - Present a better corporate image for the Council, particularly in line with visual identity requirements on the Website.
4. It is not proposed to introduce separate "implications" paragraphs for all of the issues that authors should take into account when producing reports and decision sheets. This would be impractical and invariably lead to a long list of paragraphs stating... "There are no implications". This would be unwieldy and the main focus of a report/decision sheet would be lost amongst a long list of "Implications" paragraphs.
5. The attached template (Appendix 1) is the proposed standard format of Dudley's Committee Reports. This sets out the standard headings that should appear in all reports as a minimum requirement and a checklist of the key issues that all authors should consider. The revised report format removes the requirement to include a separate "Proposals" heading which essentially duplicates the Recommendations

paragraph. This example gives practical pointers regarding the main issues all authors should cover when producing reports and Decision Sheets. To supplement this, the Democratic Services Section has produced more detailed practical guidance to Directorates which reinforces the importance of:-

- Adopting consistent standards for the format and content of reports and Decision Sheets.
 - Avoiding complex or confusing methods of paragraph numbering.
 - Using Plain English and avoiding jargon.
 - Ensuring the correct use of titles of Committees, Cabinet Members and Officers.
 - Keeping the number of appendices to a minimum and considering alternatives.
 - Including full Contact Officer details.
 - Ensuring that Committee reports are available in large print as well as the corporate standard font size.
 - Ensuring the correct classification of reports as “Confidential” or “Exempt”.
 - Including references to Useful Website addresses for further information.
6. Whilst the proposals in this report are administrative in nature, any changes to the standard report headings technically require amendments to Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution. Any such changes will therefore need formal approval of the Council.
7. Subject to the approval of the Council, the Democratic Services Section propose to undertake a series of training sessions to give practical advice and support to Directorate Officers who are involved in preparing reports for Members.

Proposal

8. It is proposed:-
- That the Council be recommended to adopt the revised corporate Committee report format, as set out in Appendix 1, with effect from the September/October cycle of meetings.
 - That all Directorates be reminded of the requirement to consider key corporate issues in the production of Committee reports and Decision Sheets.
 - That the Director of Law and Property be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Council’s Constitution.

Finance

9. All report authors must consult the appropriate Finance Officer before finalising a report. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Law

10. All report authors must consult the Monitoring Officer (Director of Law and Property) or the appropriate Legal Officer before finalising a report. Likewise, on financial issues, the Director of Finance (or his nominee) must be consulted.

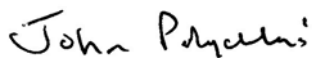
11. The Council is required to have a Constitution under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. The requirements for the corporate report format are currently set out in Part 4 of the Constitution. Any changes to this Part of the Constitution are subject to approval of full Council (Article 4.02 of the Constitution refers).

Equal Opportunities

12. It is proposed to replace the existing "Equal Opportunities" heading with a newly titled "Equality Impact" heading. This is in accordance with the recent revision of the Council's Race Equality Scheme. Appendix 1 gives more guidance on the required content of this paragraph.

Recommendation

13. That the proposals set out in paragraph 8 above be approved.



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Director of Law and Property

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List of Background Papers

Report to Corporate Board – 14th June, 2005.

Name of Committee and Date (Bold)

Report of the Director of..... (Directorate)(Bold)

Title of Report (Bold)

Purpose of Report

1. *This section should set out the main points of your report, what you are proposing, why and when. Be concise.*

Background

2. *This section should contain more detailed information, which supports that given in the purpose of the report and the recommendation section. You should be clear and concise and avoid unnecessary details.*
3. *You can use sub headings (in bold, underlined and lower case type) to break up text but do not number them. Number each paragraph of text consecutively.*
4. *In the Background Section you should give consideration to how your proposals impact on a range of key corporate issues. You should include references to the following implications in your report if they are appropriate to your proposals:-*
 - *Human Rights and Members' & Officers' Code of Conduct*
 - *Asset Management*
 - *Crime and Disorder*
 - *Personnel/Human resources*
 - *Risk Management*
 - *Gershon Efficiency Savings*
 - *Details of Consultation undertaken (eg: with the public, staff and Trade Unions)*
 - *Policy Implications (eg: how your report contributes to Council Plan themes and corporate priorities for improvement)*
 - *Corporate Parenting*
 - *Information Technology/e-Government*
 - *Health Implications/Inequalities*
 - *Environmental Impact and Sustainability*
 - *Neighbourhood Management*

Finance

5. *Where necessary, this section should include the costs of the proposals and the budget that will meet the proposals. (It is your responsibility as the author of the report to consult the appropriate Finance Officer for advice on what details you should include).*

If there are no extra resources needed, you should include a statement saying this.

Law

6. *This section should contain legal requirements or implications the proposals may have. (It is your responsibility to consult the Monitoring Officer or the appropriate Legal Officer for advice on what details you should include).*

Equality Impact

7. *This section should contain details of the likely impact of the proposals on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and other relevant groups.*

All new policies must be assessed for their impact on different racial groups before they are introduced and a brief summary of this impact assessment should be included where the report relates to the introduction of a new policy or substantial policy change. This requirement relating to other equality areas is likely to be introduced in the near future.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that:-

- *This section should set out all the proposals that you wish to be considered. These should be clear, concise and include all relevant information.*
- *You should put a separate bullet point for each decision you wish members to make.*
- *Say which Director is to be instructed or authorised to carry out the recommended action.*
- *Make it clear if the recommendations are subject to the approval of another Committee, the Cabinet or full Council.*

(leave space for signature)

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XXXXXXXXXX

Director of XXXXXXXX

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List of Background Papers

This section should include a list of those documents, which disclose facts or matters on which the report is based and which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. Published works or documents containing exempt or confidential information must not be included in this list.