

By: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy,
Performance & Health Reform

To: Governance and Audit Committee – 14 September 2011

Subject: The development of Statements of Required
Management Practice (SORPs)

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper provides an overview of the process for the development of SORPs (Statements of Required Management Practice.) It explains the purpose that SORPs serve, the method by which they are being developed, communicated and embedded into the organisation and provides a timeline for the development of specific SORPs. The paper also outlines the governance arrangements for the development and ongoing review of SORPs.

FOR ASSURANCE

Introduction and background

1. KCC is establishing a new Internal Management Control Framework. To support this, managers need clear expectations and standards in order to deliver against the new framework.
2. SORPs are not additional new requirements for managers; rather they formalise and bring together a single, practical guide to the minimum standard we expect of KCC's managers. They set out succinct and easy to read principles that explain the way that managers will carry out management tasks. Management tasks include writing a business plan, managing performance, consulting with customers etc. SORPs will be embedded into day-to-day operational practice.
3. SORPs will reduce bureaucracy and save managers time by ensuring there is a single statement of standards to ensure all management tasks are being carried out effectively and consistently across KCC. They will benefit everyone as all staff will know how day-to-day tasks are to be carried out, providing clarity and consistency. They will help to rationalise any duplicate versions of guidance, policies and procedures across directorates, creating a single "one organisation" approach.
4. SORPs are referred to in Bold Steps for Kent and will help to deliver KCC's 'design principles'.
5. SORPs are owned and championed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and all managers of people and projects within the organisation will adopt them.
6. SORPs are primarily an officer management and communication tool, however members are encouraged to be involved in commenting and developing SORPs. A briefing note will shortly be distributed to all members and as each SORP is developed, the SORP 'Owner' will ensure members are fully informed and engaged.

Process

How are SORPs being developed?

7. SORPs need to be usable, relevant and functional so that they become part of our day-to-day working practice. SORPs are being developed in a collaborative way, building upon the feedback and contribution of staff at all levels across the organisation.
8. Each SORP has an accountable owner, to lead on the development and regular review of the SORP in consultation with senior officers, members, staff and partners.
9. SORP owners are seeking input from staff in a variety of ways, including through a KNet comments page, focus groups, workshops and a dedicated SharePoint site.
10. Each SORP contains approximately 12 corporate standards that set out how the management tasks covered by the SORP should be achieved. Each SORP will provide some context on the area covered and set out governance arrangements. SORP 1 - Performance Management, was launched for trial implementation in August 2011 and is available on [KNet](#) for feedback from officers and members.
11. To keep SORPs to a manageable length and to improve compliance, each SORP will signpost to other guides, templates etc to help managers put the SORP into practice. SORP owners are working with other colleagues to develop supporting documents and these will be clearly linked and placed in a 'SORPs Toolbox' on KNet for all staff to use.
12. SORPs are being aligned to the new Kent Manager competencies, and will signpost managers to the Kent Manager and any training and support available.

What SORPs do we need and what is the timeline?

13. SORPs will cover a range of management disciplines that particularly require more consistency and clarity. Three top priority SORPs will be launched by October 2011:
 - SORP 1 – Performance Management (launched in August)
 - SORP 2 – Business & Financial Planning (due for launch in September)
 - SORP 3 – Risk Management (due for launch in October)
14. Up to 10 SORPs will be developed by April 2012. Additional SORPs which are already being developed include:
 - Communication & Consultation
 - Procurement
 - Project and Programme Management
15. Further SORPs will be discussed from October 2011, and will include key topics in the Internal Management Control Framework such as:
 - Operational Procedures
 - Information Management
 - Focus on the Customer

How will SORPs be communicated and embedded?

16. It is essential to the success of the SORPs programme that staff are aware of SORPs, their importance and the need to comply with them.

17. A communications plan has been developed for SORPs and identifies the stakeholders for the programme and how they will be communicated with.
18. A dedicated area of [KNet](#) has been developed where staff can find out all they need to know about SORPs and download the documents. This will be regularly updated as SORPs are developed, and staff will be notified via K-Mail when a new SORP is added.
19. A generic presentation on SORPs has been developed and sent to Pioneer, Challenger and Change Champions who have been asked to cascade the key messages about SORPs to their staff and colleagues.
20. Each SORP is being launched for trial implementation for approximately six months so that feedback from staff can be used to develop the final version. Staff are being encouraged to comment by Pioneers and Challengers, Change Champions and via features in K-Mail and K-Mag. A virtual message board has been set up on K-Net so staff can leave comments.
21. Further face-to-face opportunities to promote SORPs to staff are being identified, including launch events for the Kent Manager, Talk to the Top visits and Staff Awards.
22. In order to help ensure that SORPs are embedded into day-to-day management practice, the programme team are working with HR to incorporate SORPs into induction for new staff, appraisal processes and staff training.
23. A compliance measure for SORPs is being developed with input from Internal Audit.

Governance arrangements

24. SORPs are owned by CMT and championed by Corporate Managers within their directorates. Katherine Kerswell is the CMT Champion. The project is being managed on CMT's behalf by Business Strategy.
25. SORPs will be approved by Delivery Assurance Team (DAT.) SORPs will be brought to DAT for discussion before they are launched for trial implementation, and for regular review.
26. DAT are also overseeing progress on the delivery of the SORPs programme. A highlight report including a log of achievements to date and risks is being presented to each DAT meeting (*included as a background document for information*). Any concerns about progress will be escalated to CMT.

Recommendations

27. Governance and Audit committee are asked to note the process and governance for the development of SORPs, for **assurance**.

Background Documents

- DAT Monthly SORPs Highlight Report (September)

Contact

Liz Sanderson, Business Strategy, T: 01622 221703