



REPORT OF: **The Monitoring Officer**

TO: **Standards Committee**

DATE: **8th February 2017**

SUBJECT: **Member Training Update to the Standards Committee**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on the 2016/17 Member Training Programme and consider the extension of mandatory attendance for members at certain training sessions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the update report on this year's member training programme.
- (ii) Consider the extension of the requirement for mandatory attendance of members on certain training programmes
- (iii) Subject to (ii) above propose appropriate recommendations to Council for approval.
- (iv) agree for the Monitoring Officer to produce a report to the Standards Committee in March each year on the attendance of Members at the training events

3. BACKGROUND

In accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution the Committee has a role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.

In fulfilling its role of advising, training or arranging to train members on matters related to the Code of Conduct, the Committee has regularly overseen the development of a member training and development programme, which seeks to ensure that councillors can fulfil their obligations in an effective and efficient way, supporting delivery of services to the Community whilst complying with the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct covers a range of behaviours and expectations expected of Councillors in public office.

This requires members understand and are aware of key responsibilities placed upon them in their roles. Examples include those relating to reasoned decision making, personal conduct requirements and information management.

At their meeting in December the Standards Committee requested the Monitoring Officer to produce a further report on the training programme, including information on the numbers of members who attended each event so far in 2016/17. The Programme of events is attached as **Appendix 1** and the number of members who have attended each event so far this municipal year is set out in **Appendix 2**.

At this meeting the Standards Committee resolved that in considering plans for the future programme of training it considered that certain courses going forward in the programme from 2017/18 should be mandatory alongside an Annual Training Event on Code of Conduct/ethical standards, and the mandatory training for sitting on specific Committees, for example Planning Highways or Licensing Committees.

In coming to this determination, the Standards Committee also requested that the Monitoring Officer bring forward some proposals for options on how the Committee could monitor that the members attend as requested, and also in the event of them not attending, what action, could be taken.

Training Programme 2017/18

The training programme for 2017/18 commences in June 2017 and runs through to April 2018.

The Standards Committee is asked to review the options for the programme.

Currently based on previous Standards Committee discussions it is suggested the following courses would be run in 2017/18:

- 1 Code of Conduct/Ethical Standards
- 2 Data Protection & Information Governance for Members
- 3 Being a Corporate parent - A Members Guide
- 4 Understanding Adult Safeguarding – A Members Guide
- 5 Personal Health & Safety – A Members Guide
- 6 *Planning & Highways Committee – This is already provided annually and is mandatory for members wishing to sit on the Committee as a nominated member or occasionally as a substitute.*
- 7 *Licensing Committee – This is already provided annually and is mandatory for members wishing to sit on the Committee as a nominated member or occasionally as a substitute.*

This training will initially be available via `face to face` traditional training. Over time this may be replaced with e-learning modules as previously demonstrated and referred to at the meeting of the Standards Committee in December 2016.

As with Planning & Highways training any other mandatory training agreed by full Council would be put on twice to facilitate Members availability and to provide some options from members` diaries.

The final training programme could also include some `non-mandatory` `bitesize` events and options for those will be presented to the Standards Committee at their meeting in March. The non-mandatory training will look to cover areas of specific

interest to members which assists them to fulfil their role effectively. Recent examples have including `how to object to an alcohol licensing application (in the correct manner), working effectively with the press and, effective and safe use of social media.

Monitoring Attendance

This will be carried out by the Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Standards Committee.

1 Face to Face Mandatory training

The Monitoring officer will keep a record of all who have attended and report this through the Standards Committee for review on a regular basis.

2 Virtual Learning Environment & Mandatory Training

As indicated above in 2016 the Council has introduced the Virtual Learning Environment Portal, where all Council Officers and Members can access e-learning courses. During 2017/18 a number of courses will be transferred to this environment which may facilitate some of the mandatory courses (as with non-mandatory courses) becoming able to be completed `on-line`. E- reports of completion will then be able to be presented to the Standards Committee for review on a regular basis.

Failure to attend Mandatory training.

Clearly an issue would arise, as now if any members chose not to attend any of the existing or new Mandatory training events without good reason.

Currently the only `sanction` available for those who do not attend the sessions on Planning & Highways or Licensing for example, is that they are unable to sit or substitute on those Committees. If full Council was to agree on expanding the range of mandatory training, the Standards Committee must consider what the position would be if any Member did not attend (or undertake via e-learning once available) other mandatory training sessions provided.

One option would be for the Standards Committee to recommend to Full Council to consider expanding the mandatory training requirement that is currently confined to Planning and Highways and Licensing committees. Paragraph 3, Section 1 of the Code of Conduct for Members states that "*Each Member must attend annual training on the Code of Conduct/ethical standards, in addition to any current requirements to receive training for specific Committee, for example Planning & Highways or Licensing Committees*". Therefore, under this provision the Standards Committee could consider and recommend mandatory training for other specific committees.

Furthermore the Standards Committee may resolve to relay the Monitoring Officer's report to the Standards Committee to the full Council each year to more widely report on the attendance of Members at the mandatory training events.

4. RATIONALE

The Committee has a role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members. The advising on the provision of training or arranging to train councillors on matters related to the code of conduct is part of the Committees role and function as stated in the Constitution (Part 3, Section 5).

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The statutory provisions for the Standards Framework are set out in the Localism Act 2011. The Standards Committees role, functions and powers are stated in the Council's Constitution. This includes advising on the provision of training or arranging to train councillors on matters related to the code of conduct.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A governance framework in local authorities is necessary to promote and maintain high ethical standards, and to ensure public confidence.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None contained in this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

Feedback from members on the training programme has been collated from discussions at the early training events this year in the Programme. The Council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct have also been discussed by the Standards Committee.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 18 January 2016

Background Papers: Member Trainings & Standards