



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 the Standards Committee on the Call In procedure and related Member training.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Agree that Member training on Call In process and procedure should be offered to all Members and where practicable Members should have attended the training prior to participating in a Call In.
- (ii) That a clear overview of the procedural rules for a Call In be made publicly available both in advance of and at Call In meetings.

3. BACKGROUND

All Members have the opportunity to challenge an Executive Board or Executive Member decision or an Executive Decision taken by an Officer. Should six Members make this choice (with good reason) the Councils Call-In Committee would scrutinise the decision.

The purpose of Call-In is to enable the Call-In Committee to consider whether the Executive should be asked to review or amend its decision. Call-In provides an opportunity to ensure that the Council adheres to the principles of good decision-making. Call-In is a fundamental tool in the decision making process of Local Government Democracy and provides Members the opportunity to hold the Executive to account.

In the last municipal quarter there have been two Call-Ins of separate decisions. Both Call Ins attracted considerable interest from both Councillors and members of the public, with attendance being considerable and active participation at both meetings.

Whilst the current process and procedure outlined in the Constitution is comprehensive, covering 18 points of process and running to three pages, it would be of value for Members (especially new Members who may not have previously participated) to be offered training sessions on the Call In process.

Clearly any lack of understanding or knowledge of the process could result in meetings not being as efficient as they could be and result in potential complaints about code of conduct matters if roles, functions and responsibilities are not fully understood by all present.

There is also an opportunity for Standards to endorse a better understanding of the process for Members of the Public, both before and at the meeting: Namely; there are some key lines of communication that could be simplified to make the process easier for members of the public to be aware of before attending the meeting.

To support this, a proposed guide to aid understanding and give clarity to the process is attached as Appendix A and views of Members would be welcomed.

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 set out in Part 3, Section 5 of the Council's Constitution.

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

Regular revision of governance frameworks 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

None.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officers: Ben Aspinall/David Fairclough

Date: 20th January 2017

Background Papers: Blackburn with Darwen Scrutiny Handbook.
Council Constitution.

Appendix A

Call In – note on procedure:

Six Members of the Council have formally requested that an

- Executive Member Decision (delete as appropriate)
- Executive Board Decision (delete as appropriate)
- Executive Officer Decision (delete as appropriate)

Be reviewed: The term for this is “Call In”.

There will now be a Call-In Committee which will review the decision.

This meeting will be held on (date and time) at the Old Town Hall Blackburn, BB1 7DY.

Please note that for evening meetings, entrance to the Town Hall is by the back door on Tackett Street, Blackburn.

The meeting will be held in public, but capacity in the room will be limited to comply with Health and Safety and Fire regulations. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate those wishing to attend, people will be allocated seating on a first come first served basis.

Whilst the meeting is held in public, it is entirely at the discretion of the Chair whether members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during the meeting. It is custom and practice that those Councillors sitting on the Committee question the Executive.

At the end of the meeting Members will vote on whether to

- Accept the decision Called In to be reviewed.
- Request the Executive Member / Board/ Officer review the decision.
- In exceptional and specific circumstances, refer the decision to Council Forum.

If you require any further information please contact
Insert Key Officer phone / e-mail contact details.