

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

Councillors Saima Afzal

PORTFOLIO COORDINATING

DIRECTOR: David Fairclough

Annual Declarations of Interest by Members.

The Committee keeps under review the annual return of the Declarations made by Members of the Council and Parish Councils. The Committee were happy to see that over ninety percent of forms had been returned and the outstanding Members would be reminded of the need to complete the declaration as a matter of urgency.

Complaints Update to the Standards Committee

The Committee received an update on complaints received regarding Members conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members. An update was presented on the case reported after the January meeting. The report covered the period up to Friday 1st June 2018. The Committee would be kept up to date on complaints receive throughout the year, how these were being dealt with and outcomes.

Work Programme for the Committee.

The Committee considered a work programme for the year which would ensure that issues could be addressed and protocols and processes could be improved within the Council.

The Committee identified that it would wish to review the protocols in the Constitution under Part 5, Section 3 over the next two meetings. In so doing Members were keen to consider the drafting of a Member/Member protocol to compliment the Member/Officer protocol in the constitution. The Committee also discussed the 'vexatious' complainant references in the Members Complaints process and indicated that they would wish to review this as part of the years' work programme.

Local Government Ethical Standards Consultation

The Committee were updated on the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life reviewing Local Government Ethical Standards. As part of this review they had conducted consultation between 29th January 2018 and 18th May 2018.

The terms of reference for the review were to examine the structures, processes and practices in local government in England for:

- Maintaining codes of conduct for local Councillors;
- Investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process;
- Enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct;
- Declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest; and
- Whistleblowing.

- Assess whether the existing structures, processes and practices are conducive to high standards of conduct in local government;
- Make any recommendations for how they can be improved; and
- Note any evidence of intimidation of Councillors, and make recommendations for any measures that could be put in place to prevent and address such intimidation.

The review would consider all levels of local government in England, including Town and Parish Councils, Principal Authorities, Combined Authorities (including Metro Mayors) and the Greater London Authority (including the Mayor of London).

A response was sent on behalf of the Chair and Monitoring Officer. The Standards Committee received a report which set out responses to the consultation questions. The Committee will be kept informed of the outcome of the consultation and any steps necessary to ensure that the Council implemented any recommendations required.

Member Induction and Training Programme 2018/19

The Committee considered a report of the Monitoring Officer reviewing the Member Induction and Training Programme.

The Committee considered recommendations and suggestions that had been put forward to ensure that the programme met the needs of members whilst addressing the need to ensure that Members were trained to carry out statutory functions. Members also recognised the increased pressures on Members following the restructuring of the ward boundaries and the reduction in number of Members. The Committee agreed to a number of recommendations to ensure that these needs were met. The recommendations agreed by Members included

- Phasing out the `bitesize` training programme during 2018/19, replacing it with e-learning programmes, group briefings or video presentations going forward into the programme to be designed for 19/20.
- To move `civil contingencies update training` to a `bitesize` event for 2018/19.
- To advise the Monitoring Officer when promoting the 2018/19 `bitesize` events to ensure the notifications of the training are clear these events are optional for members to attend.
- To confirm that the following Courses will be Mandatory for 2018/19:
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Corporate parenting
 - Information Governance & Cybersecurity
 - Equality Training
- To agree that attendance at the Mandatory Training is a requirement for all Councillors, except where a Councillor has attended the same course in the previous municipal year.
- To note that the specific Mandatory Training for Members sitting on the Council's Planning & Highways and Licensing Committees would continue as required in the Council's Constitution.

- To agree there would be four Strategic Member Development Sessions per annum
- To agree that all mandatory training and the four Strategic Member Development Sessions be included in the year planner approved by the Council at Annual Council each year.

The Committee also agreed that additional Mandatory Courses could be added to the programme during the year where circumstances require. Independent Members of Committees, Co-opted members, independent persons and Members of Parish Councils would also be invited by the Monitoring Officer to appropriate training events.

Councillor Saima Afzal

Chair of the Standards Committee.