

Subject:	Standards Panel Training and Code of Conduct Review		
Date of Meeting:	24 June 2014		
Report of:	Monitoring Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Oliver Dixon	Tel: 01273 291512
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee about proposed training to enable all its members to serve on Standards Panels.
- 1.2 The report also seeks Committee approval to establish a cross-party working group tasked with reviewing the council's Code of Conduct for Members.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the Standards Panel training scheduled for July 2014.
- 2.2 That the Committee grants delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to establish a cross-party member working group to review the council's Code of Conduct for Members and to submit recommendations to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 25 March 2014 Audit & Standards Committee agreed a revised procedure for dealing with complaints about alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members. Under the agreed procedure, the only members entitled to serve on a Standards Panel are those who –
 - (i) are a member of the Audit & Standards Committee; and
 - (ii) have attended the necessary training and re-training specific to these Panels.
- 3.2 The training referred to in 3.1(ii) consists of mandatory training for all Audit & Standards Committee members every 12 months, or sooner, if appropriate.
- 3.3 Accordingly, members of this Committee have been invited to attend one of two sessions taking place in July 2014.

- 3.4 Training will consist of a practical workshop involving Members (in their capacity as Standards Panel members) in a fictitious case study featuring complex but realistic issues commonly encountered in standards cases. The session will begin with a very short presentation on the underlying principles and legal framework for the revised procedure. The full list of topics which the training will address is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The council's Independent Persons will between them attend each session, to explain his/her role as Standards Panel Chair, and to offer general advice on best practice for Panel hearings.
- 3.6 Those Members who come to the training with prior experience of Standards Panels will be invited to share learning with those less familiar with the regime.
- 3.7 At their March 2014 meeting, the Committee also directed the Monitoring Officer to co-ordinate a review of the Code of Conduct for Members later in the year. Accordingly, Committee approval is now sought to establish a cross-party member working group for this purpose. Their recommendations will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee prior to consideration by full Council.

4. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the Standards Panel training and the cross party review of the Code of Conduct, as they involve only a series of meetings on council premises.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 10/06/14

Legal Implications:

- 4.2 Both the Standards Panel training and the Code of Conduct review will support the council in meeting its obligations under Part 1, Chapter 7, of the Localism Act 2011.

Lawyer Consulted:

Oliver Dixon

Date: 08/06/14

Equalities Implications:

- 4.3 The Code of Conduct review will consider all provisions under the existing Code, including the obligation on Members not to do anything which may cause their authority to breach any of its equality duties (in particular as set out in the Equality Act 2010).

Sustainability Implications:

- 4.4 None arising directly from this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

4.5 None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Topics covered by Standards Panel training to be held in July 2014

Documents in Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

1. Code of Conduct for Members