

## Summary Sheet

### Standards Committee Report

Standards Committee 9 March 2017

#### Title

Training for Members of Parish and Town Councillors on Codes of Conduct and Standards and Ethics

#### Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

#### Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

N/A

#### Report Author(s)

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#### Ward(s) Affected

All

#### Executive Summary

A report updating on recent training provided to members of Parish and Town Councils (8 February 2017) on codes of conduct and standards and ethics generally.

#### Recommendations

That the Committee notes the information about the training session, further notes the actions to be taken following the training session and identifies future training initiatives to be undertaken with Parish and Town Councils.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 - Copy of training material (to be distributed at the meeting).

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Title**

Training for Members of Parish and Town Councillors on Codes of Conduct and Standards and Ethics

### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Standards Committee:
- i) notes the information about the training session
  - ii) notes the actions to be taken following the training session
  - iii) identifies future training initiatives to be undertaken with Parish and Town Councils

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Following discussions with the Standards and Ethics Committee and the Chair of the Committee, training was provided to members of Parish and Town Councillors (together with clerks) on the Code of Conduct and standards and ethics generally, as referred to below. The training was delivered by Dermot Pearson, Sumera Shabir, the Chair of the Committee and the two Independent Persons.

#### **Attendees**

- 2.2 All Parish and Town Councils were invited and the session was well attended with representatives from:
- i) Aston Parish Council (following the NALC code of conduct)
  - ii) Anston Parish Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
  - iii) Dalton Parish Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
  - iv) Dinnington Town Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
  - v) Laughton en le Morthen Parish Council (following the NALC code of conduct)
  - vi) Maltby Town Council (merging the Rotherham and NALC code of conduct)
  - vii) Wales Parish Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
  - viii) Woodsetts Parish Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
  - ix) Ulley Parish Council (following the Rotherham code of conduct)
- 2.3 Most of the Parish and Town Councils had a website (albeit being updated).

#### **Content**

- 2.2 The session comprised of a series of scenarios based on standards and ethics dilemmas; linked to the Nolan (Seven) Principles of Public Life and this was followed by a short presentation on standards and ethics arising in relation to codes of conduct.
- 2.3 Discussions covered the role of the Independent Persons, borough Councillors and social media.

- 2.4 After the conclusion of the session, the Monitoring Officer invited the individual clerks (new and existing) to discuss their experiences and common strategies.

### **Outcome**

- 2.5 The training highlighted the need for good governance and general discussion was facilitated around transparency and use of websites.
- 2.6 The clerks agreed that it would be beneficial to arrange a further separate meeting could be convened with all the clerks; where the Monitoring Officer could offer support and facilitate new and existing clerks to form a network. This is currently being arranged at a suitable location for the clerks.

### **Feedback**

- 2.7 The training was very well received as attendees were able to network with others in the session in groups, though feedback highlighted:
- 2.7.1 the temperature and acoustics could have been better
  - 2.7.2 the session could have been longer to allow more open discussion
  - 2.7.3 more sessions would be appreciated, particularly an evening session
  - 2.7.4 quarterly workshops would be ideal at varying locations
  - 2.7.5 could separate training for clerks and Councillors
- 2.8 It was suggested that future themes could include:
- 2.8.1 social media
  - 2.8.2 conflicts of interest
  - 2.8.3 planning
  - 2.8.4 local government law generally
  - 2.8.5 chairing of meetings
  - 2.8.6 code of conduct
  - 2.8.7 running disciplinary and grievance panels
  - 2.8.8 advertising Parish and Town Council vacancies and the publishing of minutes and accounts
- 2.9 There was an invitation to observe some Parish and Town Council meetings.

## **3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 Frequency and content of future training.

## **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 Recommendations have been referred to above.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 N/A

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 None

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

7.1 None

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 The Council and Standards Committee have a statutory duty to uphold ethical standards. As such, training Parish and Town Councillors (together with clerks) assists in fulfilling this duty.

## **9.0 Human Resources Implications**

9.1 None

## **10.0 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 None

## **11.0 Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 The training applies equally to all Parish and Town Councils.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

12.1 None

## **13.0 Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 None

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

Dermot Pearson, Assistant Director, Legal Services

Approvals Obtained from:-

Assistant Director Legal Services and Monitoring officer  
Dermot Pearson

**Appendix 1 - Copy of training material (to be distributed at the meeting)**