

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 8 January 2018
Report Subject	Induction and training for the Standards Committee
Report Author	Gareth Owens

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee has a number of councillor members who joined this municipal year, and with the recent recruitment of a new independent member it is timely to consider what training and development the committee requires in order to fulfil its role.

The remit of the committee is laid down by the Constitution and to fulfil that role committee members will need to understand a range of topics. The aim of this report is to explore with committee members what skills and knowledge they need to tackle their role with confidence. All members will have differing levels of knowledge and skill and so some training needs will be collective whilst others will be personal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee helps to identify the individual and collective training and development needs of its members.
2	That the committee then helps to design a programme for the delivery of training and development to meet the identified needs.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLORING THE COMMITTEE'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
1.01	<p>The terms of reference of the Standards Committee are laid down in the Constitution as follows:</p> <p>“8.7 Role and Function The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:</p> <p>8.7.1 promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives;</p> <p>8.7.2 assisting the Councillors and co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members’ Code of Conduct;</p> <p>8.7.3 advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members’ Code of Conduct;</p> <p>8.7.4 monitoring the operation of the Members’ Code of Conduct;</p> <p>8.7.5 advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members’ Code of Conduct;</p> <p>8.7.6 granting dispensations to Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members’ Code of Conduct;</p> <p>8.7.7 determining requests for representation in proceedings under the Council’s Indemnity Scheme for Members and officers;</p> <p>8.7.8 Dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that officer by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.</p> <p>8.7.9 The exercise of 8.7.1 to 8.7.8 above in relation to the Community Councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those community councils. “</p>
1.02	<p>From those terms of reference it is clear that members of the Committee need, amongst other things, the following skills and knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the code (including “the Nolan Principles”) and ombudsman’s guidance • Knowledge of how the processes in the ethical regime work • An understanding of the legislation permitting the grant of dispensation and the principles to be applied • An understanding of the indemnity scheme for members • A knowledge of the rules of natural justice and evidenced based decision making plus how to apply them in the context of a standards hearing • In addition, when considering requests for dispensation, the Committee will need to understand the processes or transactions within which the applicants are seeking permission to participate e.g. the planning process, the Community Asset Transfer programme etc.

1.03	<p>Members of the committee may identify further skills and knowledge that they will require. Committee members are asked to consider the above list and use their experience to date to help identify a comprehensive list of matters.</p> <p>Members will have vary degrees of experience in the matters identified and therefore it will be necessary to agree which items should be the subject of collective training of the whole committee and which will be for individual members.</p>
1.04	<p>Members will be aware that the council provides short training sessions (30 minutes) prior to committee meetings. These are suitable for small topics that simply require knowledge transfer. Larger topics can be split across several sessions but some topics may need a longer training event (e.g. a whole afternoon). Equally there is limited opportunity for skill practice in a 30 minute session and so again longer events may be required.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The 30 minute training slots can be supported within existing officer resource. Depending upon the nature of desired training it may be necessary to employ external resource. There is a small budget that can be used for this and it may be possible to share costs with neighbouring authorities.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Committee members have a range of experience. Whilst newer members are gaining in confidence they can rely on the more experienced members and officer support in order to build their skills and knowledge.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance</p>

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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>“The Nolan Principles” – the Committee on Standards In Public Life was established to scrutinise behaviours in both elected and paid public office. Its first Chairman was Lord Nolan and during his tenure the committee produced 7 principles which are expected to underpin the behaviour of those holding public office.</p>