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# **ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL**



Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby in Ashfield Nottingham NG17 8DA

# Agenda

# Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee

Date: Wednesday, 30th June, 2021

Time: **7.00 pm** 

Venue: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road,

Kirkby-in-Ashfield

For any further information please contact:

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01623 457317

# STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE

# **Membership**

Chairman: Councillor Lee Waters

Councillors:

Chris Baron Jim Blagden
Christian Chapman David Hennigan
Warren Nuttall Helen-Ann Smith

# FILMING/AUDIO RECORDING NOTICE

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#### **SUMMONS**

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Carol Cooper-Smith Chief Executive

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	AGENDA	Page
1.	To receive apologies for absence, if any.	
2.	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non Registrable Interests.	
3.	To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2021.	5 - 12
4.	Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee Work Plan 2021 - 2022.	13 - 18
5.	Ethical Governance Update.	19 - 36
6.	Member Training and Development.	37 - 50



#### STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE

# Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th March, 2021 at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Lee Waters in the Chair;

Councillors Jim Blagden, Christian Chapman, David Hennigan, Warren Nuttall, Phil Rostance

and Helen-Ann Smith.

**Apology for Absence:** Stuart Fletcher (resigned as Selston Parish

Council representative).

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Ruth Dennis and Shane Wright.

**In Attendance:** Councillor Jason Zadrozny (as Annesley & Felley

Parish Council Representative).

# SP.16 <u>Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests</u> and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

#### SP.17 Minutes

#### **RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 December 2020, be received and approved as a correct record.

#### **SP.18 Whistleblowing Annual Update**

The Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) presented the report and provided Members with an update as to the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy over the preceding 12 months. In relation to the Whistleblowing Policy, Members were advised that no changes were required for the forthcoming year.

One anonymous whistleblowing complaint, via the trade union, had been received in the preceding twelve months. The allegations were substantial and were in relation to fraud, corruption and bribery. An extensive investigation was carried out with 16 people being interviewed by the Director of Legal and Governance and the Chief Executive and the police were also involved at certain points in the exercise. On its conclusion, there had been no evidence of any wrongdoing and no disciplinary action was taken but some management recommendations had been made and disseminated accordingly.

It had been acknowledged following the investigation, that most whistleblowing allegations were now being submitted anonymously through the unions and management were keen to ascertain why this was. Investigations could be undertaken with far greater clarity and understanding if the whistle blower was a named officer and it was hoped that this course of action could be encouraged in the future.

The Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) was intending to be a more visible presence at the Depot going forward to encourage a drop in approach for staff wishing to voice any concerns or worries in confidence.

#### RESOLVED that

- a) it be acknowledged that no changes were required to the Whistleblowing Policy, as appended to the report, for the forthcoming year;
- b) the update as to the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy over the preceding 12 months, be received and noted.

#### **SP.19 Annual Constitution Review**

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented the report which detailed the proposed annual changes to the Constitution for the 2021/22 municipal year. Key officers had submitted their suggested updates for the document which usually came about due to changes in legislation and the introduction of new policies. The table contained in the report highlighted the main changes for 2021/22 including any textual amendments and updates to officer titles as required.

Contract Procedure Rules had been changed to reflect the country's departure from the EU but the Council was still awaiting further information in relation to new procurement rules. Work was also being undertaken by officers to consider how to incorporate the decision taken at the 4 February Council meeting (via a motion) to ensure that as many purchases as possible, procured by the Council, would come from UK based organisations and/or local businesses.

The Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) advised Committee that the Council Procedure Rules would continue to be reviewed up until the report's submission to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021 to incorporate the latest guidance in relation to virtual, face to face and/or hybrid meetings.

Temporary Covid legislation with regard to virtual meetings was due to end on 7 May 2021 and the Council would then be required to return to face to face meetings with social distancing rules being observed. Local authorities nationally had recognised that this change would be extremely difficult to facilitate and many had lobbied Government for an extension to the temporary legislation. The outcome was awaited.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution for 2021/22, be received and noted.

# SP.20 Committee on Standards in Public Life and Code of Conduct Update

The Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) presented the report and firstly took Members through progress in relation to implementation of the Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendations, incorporating where applicable the recommendations from the recent informal Standard Working Group.

Members fully considered each recommendation in turn and agreed their progress/implementation as required.

Secondly, the Committee considered the new draft Members Code of Conduct that was a hybrid version of the Council's current code and the new Model Code of Conduct as produced by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Members had already debated the content of the new Code at length through the informal Standards Working Group and the draft was now being presented to Committee for final consideration prior to its submission to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021.

The informal Standards Working Group had however, highlighted five areas for final consideration prior to approval and these were in relation to the following:

- to agree the definition of what was included as a Disclosable Personal Interest
- to consider if declarations of interest should be registered in advance or to stay with the current Council process of registering interests at the start of a meeting
- to consider whether the wording for "Non-disclosable Pecuniary/Other interest" should be changed to "Non-Registrable Interests"
- to consider if Members should continue with the Council's current approach to Member involvement in discussion and voting after declaring interests at a meeting
- whether to state in the Code a financial value (£50) for a gift or hospitality that is declined, or to update the Code to the more recent version of a "significant" gift only.

#### RESOLVED that

a) the updated position regarding the implementation of the Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendations and to include the ongoing work to the Committee's Work Plan for 2021/22, be approved as follows:

	Best Practice:	Agreed:
1.	Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition	The new Member Code of Conduct, as recommended to Council for approval, contains the bullying and harassment definitions based on those in the LGA's Model Code of Conduct
2.	Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors	The new Member Code of Conduct, as recommended to Council for approval, contains provisions based on those in the LGA's Model Code of Conduct (including some current Council wording)  The Complaints Process, to be reviewed by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee as part of their 2021/22 Work Plan
3.	Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities	Consultation on the new draft Code to be undertaken through existing channels such as the Citizens' Panel, the Youth Council and the Council's website and social media platforms, prior to submission to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021
4.	An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.	In the event that Council adopts the revised Code at its Annual Meeting in May 2021, the document will be prominently placed on the Council's website to be accessible to both Councillors and public alike
5.	Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV	Agreed to develop a Register on the Website and to introduce quarterly reporting through the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee

6.	Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered	The Council's Complaints Process, to be reviewed as part of the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee's Workplan for 2021/22 will include such a public interest test and be prominently published on the Council's website
7.	Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons	Procedures already in place with access to two Independent Persons
8.	An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial	Procedures already in place and will remain in the updated Complaints Process once reviewed by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee as part of its Workplan for 2021/22
9.	Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied	Procedures already in place and will remain in the updated Complaints Process once reviewed by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee as part of its Workplan for 2021/22, including publication on the Council's website
10.	A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes	Procedures already in place (complete with access to an electronic complaint form) and will remain in the updated Complaints Process once reviewed by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee as part of its Workplan for 2021/22

11.	Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances	Review of Parish Council and Monitoring Officer roles and procedures to be undertaken in the forthcoming municipal year, in conjunction with Parish Council representatives
12.	Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work	Review of Parish Council and Monitoring Officer roles and procedures to be undertaken in the forthcoming municipal year, in conjunction with Parish Council representatives
13.	A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation	Discussions taking place at a County level to develop reciprocal arrangements for accessing monitoring officers from neighbouring authorities
14.	Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place	No action required at this present time

15.	Senior officers should meet	Agreed to facilitate ad hoc
	regularly with political group	meetings as required at the
	leaders or group whips to	Chief Executive and
	discuss standards issues	Monitoring Officer's discretion

b) the new draft Member Code of Conduct, as appended to the report, be approved and recommended to Council at its Annual Meeting on 20 May 2021, for approval.

# **SP.21** Annual Ethical Governance Update

The Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) presented an overview of the work of the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee during 2020/2021, asked Members to consider the Workplan items for 2021/2022 and to note the update in relation to Member Code of Conduct complaints to date.

Members acknowledged that the progress with the Workplan had faltered during 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic but had picked up in early 2021. Work on the review of the Nottinghamshire Authorities Protocol with Nottinghamshire Police had not been started and would be rolled over onto the Workplan for 2021/22.

Work however, on the new Member Code of Conduct, had been really productive and the new draft Code had been submitted to Members at this meeting for consideration. Meeting as an informal group had been extremely useful for officers and Members alike and it was intended that these would continue to be utilised in the forthcoming year.

Members debated the content of the new Workplan for 2021/22 and acknowledged the current position in relation to Members complaints. Due to the pandemic, minimal progress had been made with the majority of the complaints and although further resources had been made available, there was still a considerable amount of work to be undertaken to clear the backlog.

Some work had been progressing, but it was sporadic. Outsourcing the complaints was not a viable option as this was extremely expensive and not something the Council could financially support at this present time.

10 new formal complaints had been received during 2020, with a further 4 already being submitted in the early part of 2021. It was acknowledged however, on consideration of the complaint forms, that many of the accusations were seemingly frivolous and trying to eradicate this type of complaint was an issue to be considered by officers in the future.

#### **RESOLVED** that

a) progress made in relation to the agreed 2020/21 Workplan and the items proposed for the 2021/22 Workplan, be received and endorsed;

<ul> <li>the number of Member complaints received during 2020/21 to date, as summarised in the report, including the current outstanding complaints as set out in Appendix 1, be duly noted.</li> </ul>
The meeting closed at 8.30 pm
Chairman.

# Agenda Item 4



Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	30 JUNE 2021
Heading:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2021-2022		
Portfolio Holder:	N/A		
Ward/s:	N/A		
Key Decision: NO			
Subject to Call-In: NO			

# **Purpose of Report**

This report asks Members of the Committee to consider and approve the attached Work Plan for the Committee for the next municipal year.

# Recommendation(s)

The Committee is requested to consider and approve the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022

# Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To reflect good practice.

# **Alternative Options Considered**

(with reasons why not adopted)

The Committee may consider adding or deleting work items and may consider if the proposed timeframe for completion of tasks needs amending.

# **Detailed Information**

The draft work plan for the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee for the municipal year 2021-2022 is attached at **Appendix 1** to the report.

The Committee is asked to consider the draft plan for approval. The Work Plan includes suggested items put forward in the Annual Ethical Governance Update report which was presented to Committee in March 2021.

# **Implications**

# **Corporate Plan:**

To ensure we deliver high-quality public services we have adopted a set of corporate values which underpin the successful delivery of our priorities. How we work is as important as what we do.

The Council's values are:

- People Focussed;
- Honest;
- Proud:
- Ambitious.

It is important that the Council has the most effective infrastructure and support to enable:

- The delivery of the Corporate Plan
- Financial sustainability to continue to deliver key services
- A productive workforce that delivers services well

# Legal:

There are no significant legal issues associated with the approval of the work plan. Legal issues in relation to specific pieces of work will be considered at that time.

#### Finance:

Budget Area	Implication		
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None. There are no financial implications associated with approving the work plan. Any financial issues in relation to specific pieces of work will be considered at that time.		
General Fund – Capital Programme	None		
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None		
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None		

#### Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
There are no risks associated with the approval of the work plan itself.	Approval of the work plan.
Failing to adopt a work plan would not be considered best	

practice as the Council would then not be able to ensure the Council exercises its duties to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. The implementation of the work plan for this Committee ensures the Council is open and transparent in the way it deals with ethical governance.

The Council has recognised the following Corporate Risk:
ADC) CR003 Ethical Governance
– failure/delay to implement changes to the Members' Code of Conduct and recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and Peer Challenge)

The reporting and work of the Committee demonstrates the Council's commitment to maintaining high levels of ethical behaviour and incorporates work plan items to address the identified risk.

#### **Human Resources:**

There are no direct HR issues relating to the adoption of the work plan.

# **Environmental/Sustainability**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to the adoption of the work plan. Each work plan item will consider equalities issues as part of its development and implementation.

# **Equalities:**

There are no direct equalities issues relating to the adoption of the work plan. Each work plan item will consider equalities issues as part of its development and implementation.

#### Other Implications:

None.

#### **Background Papers**

None.

#### **Report Author and Contact Officer**

Ruth Dennis DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE <u>r.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk</u> 01623 457009



# **Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee**

# Work Plan - 2021/2022

Proposed Work Item	Timeframe
1. Quarterly Complaint Update  A report to committee to keep it updated in respect of new and ongoing complaints made relating to the conduct of Members.	June 2021 October 2021 December 2021 March 2022
2. Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life  To consider the Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and implementation of Best Practice Recommendations to include:  o Revised Code of Conduct Complaints Process o Online Register of Gifts and Hospitality, quarterly reporting	Ongoing throughout 2021/22
3. Members Training Policy and Programme  To revise the Members Training Programme	June 2021
4. Politically Restricted Posts – Update To seek approval to review and update the list of politically restricted posts  To approve a revised list following consultation.	June 2021 October 2021
5. Use of Resources Policy  To revisit the previously drafted (but not finalised) Policy in light of the revised Code of Conduct	October 2021

6. Review of the Nottinghamshire Authorities Protocol with Nottinghamshire Police  To review the Nottinghamshire Authorities Protocol with Nottinghamshire Police regarding the reporting of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	December 2021
7. Whistleblowing Policy  Annual report to consider amendments (if required) to the policy and to monitor the application of the policy	March 2022
8. Annual Review  Report to consider the work of the Committee over the year compared to the Work Plan  To consider an overview of the ethical governance of the Council	March 2022
9. Constitution Review  Consideration of proposed amendments to the Constitution for recommendation to Council	March 2022

# Agenda Item 5



Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	30 JUNE 2021
Heading:	ETHICAL GOVERNANCE UPDATE		
Portfolio Holder:	N/A		
Ward/s:	N/A		
Key Decision: NO			
Subject to Call-In: NO			

# **Purpose of Report**

- 1. Update in respect of Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendation number 5 regarding gifts and hospitality.
- 2. Update in respect of Politically Restricted Posts

To provide the Committee with an overview of politically restricted posts as required by legislation set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (LGHA 1989) with further details in the Local Government (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990 and amended in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The report seeks authority to commence a review of the existing list.

3. Update in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints.

# Recommendation(s)

#### The Committee is requested to:

- 1. Note the update regarding Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendation 5 regarding gifts and hospitality;
- Authorise the Monitoring Officer (being the appointed proper officer for the
  purposes of maintenance of the list) to carry out a review of the existing list of
  politically restricted posts with the support of HR and thereafter consult with the
  Trade Unions in respect of the revised list before reporting back to the next
  Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee any changes, deletions or additions
  for approval;
- 3. Note the updated position in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints as set out in Appendix 2.

# Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Update in respect of Committee on Standards in Public Life – as part of ongoing work of the Committee.

Politically restricted posts - to comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Code of Conduct complaints update - to reflect good practice. To enable Members to monitor the volume and progress of complaints.

# **Alternative Options Considered**

(with reasons why not adopted)

Update in respect of Committee on Standards in Public Life – the Committee could decide not to accept the update or to not implement best practice recommendation 5, but this would not be in line with best practice and the previous views of the Committee.

Politically restricted posts - none considered. The Council is under a duty to comply with the legislation and review the list regularly.

Code of Conduct complaints update – none considered. The update is for noting.

#### **Detailed Information**

1. UPDATE REGARDING THE BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Committee has committed to continuing to consider and implement the best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and this is part of the proposed work plan for 2021/2022 which appears elsewhere on the agenda.

Best practice recommendation 5 states:

Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

The current practice is for the Monitoring Officer to review returns annually and the Register of Members' Gifts and Hospitality is audited by internal audit on a regular basis. The Register is not currently published or reported to Committee. A reminder to complete declarations is sent to Members annually. There are an average 1-3 declarations per year.

The Committee has previously agreed to:

- Develop a Register on the Council's Website.
- Introduce quarterly reporting through Committee (albeit that Members were concerned this is disproportionate to the number of declarations made on an annual basis).
- Produce a Guidance Note for Members (in line with the annual reminder).

The Council's Report Management System – Modern.gov – is currently being upgraded and will shortly become Cloud based in line with the Digital Transformation Programme. The system has facility for Gifts and Hospitality to be recorded on it and published in a similar way to the Register of Members' Interests. As part of the upgrade the Gifts and Hospitality function will be activated by the end of August; it is proposed that all new Member Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality will be entered on to the Modern.gov system once the function is active which will be available for public scrutiny. Declarations made through Modern.gov will be updated on an ongoing basis and so will not need to be updated quarterly. All future meetings of this Committee will receive a summary update of the Declarations made. The Register currently shows that the last declaration was made in January 2020.

Committee is asked to note the update regarding Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendation 5 regarding gifts and hospitality.

#### 2. POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS

As part of the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee proposed work plan for 2021/2022 it is recommended that the list of politically restricted posts within the Authority should be reviewed. It is good practice to review the list regularly to ensure the list remains up to date. The list was last updated and approved by Committee in June 2018. The Monitoring Officer was appointed proper officer for the purposes of maintenance of the list previously by the Committee. It would now be appropriate to carry out a review.

#### **Historical Position**

The first statutory attempt to ensure the political impartiality of those who serve in local government was under the Local Government Act 1972 (LGHA 1972) which prevents a Councillor from being employed in any capacity by the local authority he/she is serving.

In 1989, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 introduced a principle of 'politically restricted posts' and of restricting the political activities of local authority employees. These reforms were made in response to the Widdecombe report which had identified issues of concern involving local authority officers and the apparent lack of political impartiality, which lead to separate loyalties and prejudicial service.

The report distinguished 'twin-tracking' which is where a local authority employee is also an elected Member of another local authority, for special criticism. The concerns included inability to serve the interests of the council on which they sit and the potential lack of political impartiality. Twin-tracking involving those holding 'politically restricted seats' is now restricted by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Part 1, which prohibits such activities.

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 also outlined provisions relating to the appointment of assistants for political groups ('political assistants').

#### Restrictions under the Local Government Act 1972 - Restrictions on Members becoming Officers

A local authority cannot appoint as an employee, in any capacity, any councillor who is currently a member of that authority or who has been a member in the previous 12 months (section 116 Local Government Act 1972).

# Restrictions on Officers becoming Members

Under section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, an authority employee will be disqualified from being elected or holding office as a member of that local authority. This principle also applies to joint authorities under section 80; therefore, an individual is disqualified from standing or holding office with that specific authority if he holds any paid office or employment with a local or joint authority.

#### Politically Restricted Posts

The legislation regarding politically restricted posts is to be found in Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (LGHA 1989) with further details in the Local Government (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990 and amended in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The aim of this legislation is to ensure the political impartiality of local government employees who hold posts involving duties of a politically sensitive nature.

The effect of including a local authority employee on the list of 'politically restricted posts' is to prevent that individual from having any active political role either in or outside the workplace.

Politically restricted employees will automatically be disqualified from standing for or holding elected office and these restrictions are incorporated as terms in the employee's contract of employment under section 3 Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) Regulations 1990. It is left to the discretion of each authority whether or not to reinstate an employee who resigns his post and then consequently fights and loses an election.

In practice, this equates to debarring a substantial number of local government employees from standing for office as:

- local councillors
- MPs
- MEPs
- Members of the Welsh Assembly
- · Members of Scottish Parliament

They are also restricted from:

- canvassing on behalf of a political party or a person who is or seeks to be a candidate (Regulation 3, Schedule Part I, paragraph 5, Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) Regulations 1990);
- speaking to the public at large or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression that they are advocating support for a political party (Regulation 3, Schedule Part II, paragraph 5, Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) Regulations 1990).

The cumulative effect of these restrictions is to limit the holders of politically restricted posts to bare membership of political parties with no active participation within the party permitted.

All local authority employees, including craft and manual workers, fall within the scope of the Act. Part time posts are also included where, if the individual was employed full time, the equivalent remuneration would equal or exceed the threshold set out in the statute.

# Which posts are politically restricted?

Each local authority is under a duty to draw up and regularly update a list of those posts which are politically restricted. Politically restricted posts fall into three broad categories:

#### **Specified posts:**

- the Head of the Paid Service (section 4 LGHA, 1989)
- the Statutory Chief Officers
- Non-Statutory Chief Officers
- Deputy Chief Officers
- the Monitoring Officer (section 5 LGHA, 1989)
- the Chief Finance Officer (section 151 LGHA, 1989)
- Officers exercising delegated powers, i.e. persons whose posts are for the time being specified by the authority in a list maintained in accordance with section V100G(2) of the Local Government Act
- Assistants to Political Groups.

All these post holders are politically restricted without rights of appeals for exemption to the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee.

#### Posts paid at or above a certain level

All posts where the remuneration level is or exceeds the 'spinal column point' 44 on the NJC for Local Government Services scales, will be automatically included on the list of politically restricted posts (Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) (No. 2) Regulations 1990).

Remuneration is a wider term than 'salary level' and would include other variable elements of pay (aside from regional weightings) such as 'acting up'/overtime/shift bonus and performance related pay elements. Cars and other fringe benefits in kind are not intended to be included.

These post holders are allowed to appeal to the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee to be exempted from the list, on the grounds that they do not influence policy or speak on behalf of the authority to journalists or broadcasters.

#### "Sensitive" posts

A sensitive post is one which meets one or both of the following duties-related criteria:

- giving advice on a regular basis to the authority itself, to any committee or subcommittee of the authority or to any joint committee on which the authority are represented; or where the authority are operating executive arrangements, to the executive of the authority; to any committee of that executive or to any member of that executive who is also a member of the authority;
- speaking on behalf of the authority on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

These post holders can appeal to the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee to be exempted from the list, on the grounds that the authority has wrongly applied the criteria.

The current list of politically restricted posts is attached as **Appendix 1**. The Monitoring Officer will work in conjunction with HR to review the list to take account of any changes to establishment or pay scales since the list was last updated in 2018. The draft revised list will be submitted to the Corporate Leadership Team and Trade Unions for comment before being reported back the next meeting of this Committee.

#### Procedure on Appeal

Employees included in the list on either remuneration-related or duties-related grounds can appeal against their inclusion, if they feel that they cannot influence policy, or that the local authority has incorrectly applied the duties-related criteria.

All such appeals require a letter from the applicant formally seeking exemption and a full job description of the post (a 'certificate of opinion' from the authority will also be required in the case of a post holder at or above the remuneration ceiling).

# Human Rights and Politically Restricted Posts

The compatibility of political restrictions on local authority posts with an individual's rights under the European Convention of Human Rights was tested in the case of *Ahmed and others v UK* in 1999.

The European Court of Human Rights held that the political restrictions did not breach Article 10 (the right to freedom of expression) or Article 11 (the right to freedom of association) of the applicant's Convention rights, as the public has a right to expect that those holding higher level local government office are politically impartial.

The Committee is asked to authorise the Monitoring Officer to carry out a review of the existing list of politically restricted posts with the support of HR and thereafter consult with the Trade Unions in respect of the revised list before reporting back to the next Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee any changes, deletions or additions for approval.

#### 3. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

This report outlines in **Appendix 2** the number of complaints of alleged Member misconduct which remain outstanding and a summary overview of the status of ongoing complaints.

Since the last update to the Committee:

- 6 complaints relating to District Councillors have been concluded with summary details contained in the report;
- There have been 8 new formal complaints in this period regarding District Councillors.

The Committee is requested to note the updated position in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints.

# **Implications**

#### **Corporate Plan:**

To ensure we deliver high-quality public services we have adopted a set of corporate values which underpin the successful delivery of our priorities. How we work is as important as what we do. The Council's values are: People Focussed; Honest; Proud; Ambitious.

# Legal:

Politically restricted posts are governed by legislation set out in the body of the report and the draft list has been developed taking the statutory criteria into account.

#### Finance:

There are no financial implications arising from this report except as set out below:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The Authority incurs costs in investigating complaints of alleged Member misconduct if investigations are carried out externally, and these charges are borne by the General Fund. The Council investigates complaints in house as far as possible to reduce costs. Where complaints need to be investigated externally these costs are expected to be contained within existing budgets.
General Fund – Capital Programme	None
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None

#### Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
The Council has recognised the following Corporate Risk:	Ongoing work by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee in relation to the Committee on

Ethical Governance – failure/delay to implement changes to the Members' Code of Conduct and recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and Peer Challenge (CR003)

Significant resource to deal with implications of proposed Code of Conduct changes.

Significant resource to deal with implications of implementing the recommendation of the CSPL.

Potential for negative perception of the Council which impacts upon the Council's reputation.

Potential for adverse impact upon the workings of the Council.

Without new legislation does not provide holistic response to the recommendation of the CSPL.

Standards in Public Life – report on Local Government Ethical Standards

Present Quarterly Complaint Monitoring reports to Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee

Members received training regarding the Code of Conduct, their behaviours and roles and responsibilities as part of the induction in May 2019. In line with the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation and the adoption of a new Code of Conduct at the AGM on 20 May 2021 further training will be organised.

#### **Human Resources:**

The review of politically restricted posts will be undertaken with Human Resources.

# **Environmental/Sustainability**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability implications in the report.

# **Equalities:**

The review of politically restricted posts will be carried out in accordance with legislation and consideration of the Council's commitment to equality and diversity implications.

#### Other Implications:

Trades Unions and Corporate Leadership Team will be consulted on the list of politically restricted posts before reporting back to the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee at their next meeting.

#### **Background Papers**

None.

# **Report Author and Contact Officer**

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# **ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# LIST OF POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS

# 1. Specified Posts:

- Chief Executive
- Director of Housing and Assets (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Director of Resources and Business Transformation
- Director of Place and Communities
- Chief Finance Officer (& Section 151 Officer)

# 2. Posts paid at or above a certain level

All posts where the remuneration level is or exceeds the 'spinal column point' 44 on the NJC for Local Government Services scales, will be automatically included on the list of politically restricted posts (Local Government (Politically Restricted Posts) (No. 2) Regulations 1990).

- Chief Accountant
- Assistant Director, Planning and Regulatory Services
- Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager Corporate Support and Transformation
- Principal Solicitor to be re-designated to Service Manager Legal Services
- Transport and Depot Services Manager
- Assistant Director, Place and Wellbeing
- Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Environment
- Assistant Director, Assets and Investments
- Corporate Manager (Revenues & Customer Services) to be re-designated to Service Manager Revenues and Benefits
- ICT Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager, ICT
- Building Control & Land Charges Manager
- Locality Team Leader
- Forward Planning Team Manager
- Community Protection Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager, Community Safety
- Senior Solicitor
- Development Team Manager
- Corporate Risk Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager Risk and Emergency Planning
- Projects and Partnership Team Leader
- Lettings and Strategic Housing Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager,
   Strategic Housing and Lettings
- Planned, Cyclical and Estates Manager
- Responsive and Voids Manager
- Support Services Manager
- Senior Operations Manager Technical Services to be re-designated to Service Manager, Repairs and Maintenance
- Tenancy Support Housing Manager to be re-designated to Service Manager, Housing Management and Tenancy Services
- Service Manager Democratic and Scruting Services

- Service Manager Electoral Services
- Service Manager Commercial Development

# 3. "Sensitive" posts

#### Definition

- giving advice on a regular basis to the authority itself, to any committee or sub-committee of the
  authority or to any joint committee on which the authority are represented; or where the
  authority are operating executive arrangements, to the executive of the authority; to any
  committee of that executive or to any member of that executive who is also a member of the
  authority;
- giving advice on a regular basis speaking on behalf of the authority on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.
  - Democratic Services Officer
  - Assistant Solicitor
  - Legal Executive
  - Senior Communications Officer
  - Communications Officer

REFERENCE	DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY MONITORING OFFICER	COMPLAINANT TYPE	COMPLAINT ABOUT A DISTRICT OR PARISH COUNCILLOR	ALLEGED BREACH	PROGRESS UPDATE	OUTCOME
ADC2019- 12	14 June 2019	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	Draft report circulated to parties for comments. Responses received and being considered.	
ADC2020- 01	8 January 2020	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	COMPLETE	No further action. No evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct identified.
ADC2020- 03	26 June 2020	Public District Councillor	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct.	Discussed complaint with complainant and Independent Person, discussions to be arranged	

				2.5 Confidentiality	with subject members – seeking informal resolution	
ADC2020- 04	26 June 2020	Public District Councillor	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.5 Confidentiality	Discussed complaint with complainant and Independent Person, discussions to be arranged with subject members – seeking informal resolution	
ADC2020- 06	18 November 2021	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct.	COMPLETE	Apology provided. No further action.
ADC2020- 07	November 2020	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. Incorrect declaration of interest.	Outcome drafted, awaiting information before circulation.	
ADC2021- 01	20 January 2021	Public	District Councillor	Unspecified by complainant	COMPLETE	No further action. No evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct.

ADC2021 - 03	13 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct.	COMPLETE	No further action. No evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct.
ADC2021- 04	13 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct.	COMPLETE	No further action. No evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct.
ADC2021- 05	29 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	Failure to declare an interest	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.	
ADC2021- 06	29 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	Failure to declare an interest	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.	
ADC2021- 07	29 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	Failure to declare an interest	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.	
ADC2021- 08	5 April 2021	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect	Ongoing clarification with complainant regarding	

				2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. Incorrect declaration of interest.	complaint details and evidence.
ADC2021- 09	8 May 2021	Public	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. Incorrect declaration of interest.	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.
ADC2021- 10	6 March 2021	District Councillor	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. Incorrect declaration of interest.	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.
ADC2021- 11	6 March 2021	District Councillor	District Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. Incorrect declaration of interest.	Initial gathering of information underway in order to assess.

REFERENCE	DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY MONITORING OFFICER	COMPLAINANT TYPE	COMPLAINT ABOUT A DISTRICT OR PARISH COUNCILLOR	ALLEGED BREACH	PROGRESS UPDATE	OUTCOME
SPC2020-01	6 May 2020	District Councillor	Parish Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct.	Assessment underway	
SPC2020-02	10 July 2020	Public	Parish Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	Assessment underway	
SPC2020-03	1 August 2020 9 August 2020 11 August 2020	Public District Councillor	Parish Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	Assessment underway – some clarification needed in terms of evidence of social media posts referred to and also regarding a report made to the police in respect of elements of this complaint before able to proceed.	

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SPC2020-04	9 August 2020 11 August 2020	Public District Councillor	Parish Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	Assessment underway – some clarification needed in terms of evidence of social media posts referred to before able to proceed	
SPC2021-01	11 January 2021	District Councillor	Parish Councillor	2.1 Respect 2.2 Contrary to high standards of conduct. 2.7 Disrepute	Assessment underway	

# Agenda Item 6



Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	30 June 2021
Heading:	MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT		
Portfolio Holder:			
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

### **Purpose of Report**

The current Member Development Strategy was approved at Council on the 16 February 2017. The Strategy sets out a commitment from Ashfield District Council regarding training and development for Elected Members.

Its aim was to provide guidance on how members will be supported and provided with learning and development opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge necessary to undertake their roles as community leaders and representatives of the Council.

Following its approval in 2017, there has been a number of changes in the following years including new Elected Members following the District Elections in May 2019 and developments in online training and digital interaction following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current strategy is attached as Appendix A. This reports objective is to consider how the strategy can be updated to ensure it is fit for purpose. This includes, self assessments, monitoring, Member development, types and frequency of training and those areas of mandatory training.

### Recommendation(s)

Members of the Committee are asked to;

- Consider the key skills and knowledge required to assist Members with their role.
- Discuss improvements to Member training, both for Committees and Member development as a whole, including those mandatory elements.
- Review the current Member Development Strategy.

# Reasons for Recommendation(s)

As a Council, we recognise that the learning and development of Members is crucial to our success and will bring wider benefits to both the organisation and our citizens

### **Alternative Options Considered**

The current Member Development Strategy is for discussion only. It is recognised that in the proceeding four years there has been significant change and challenges for Elected Members and these should be considered in any review of the current Strategy. Any alternative options or actions suggested will be considered as part of the wider development of a Strategy before approval.

# **Detailed Information**

Local Authorities have an obligation to ensure that they support elected Members to provide and improve corporate governance, local democracy and local services. The Council recognises that members have a pivotal role in taking forward the modernisation agenda and that its success will depend on elected members having the capacity to provide the best possible service to their residents.

All Elected Members whether newly elected or experienced will benefit from the opportunities available for specific learning and continuing development in order to fully appreciate and contribute to the dynamic service delivery agenda and to update and refresh the skills and knowledge required.

All Elected Members need to understand the scope and scale of the role in order to be able to identify the personal development needs that will enable them to fulfil the ever increasing individual and political demands.

### The Different Roles of Members

There is considerable overlap in the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of all Elected Members in their different roles. It is therefore helpful to identify at this stage the different roles that elected members have and for which they need to be equipped.

#### As Members of Council

Providing collective co-ordinated strategic direction to the policy framework of the Council including budgeting to meet strategic priorities.

#### As Cabinet Members

Having a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of particular portfolios they hold as Executive Members and providing strategic direction within that portfolio. Providing collective leadership and direction as Cabinet members and ensuring a coordinated approach to policy and strategy development across the Council and with our partners.

### As Overview and Scrutiny Members

Providing constructive challenge as members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the strategic and policy development of the Council and its service performance to support the Council in delivering its strategic objectives.

### As Members of Regulatory Committees

Carrying out the regulatory functions of the Council in a fair and proper manner, consistent with legal obligations.

### As Opposition Members

Providing constructive challenge as opposition Members to the strategic and policy development of the Council and its service performance to support the Council in delivering its strategic objectives.

Improving identification and assessment of training requirements will provide additional governance to the democratic process and ensure that Elected Members gain the necessary skills to carry out their role effectively.

### **Considerations for Revising the Strategy**

To ensure that the revised Member Training and Development Strategy is fit for purpose Members should consider the following areas;

- Purpose and aims
- Elected Member skills and personal development
- Identifying training needs
- Monitoring Elected Member training
- Delivery Methods
- Ethical Standards
- Equalities and Inclusion
- Mandatory training
- Inductions

Following feedback from Elected Members a revised draft Strategy will be presented to the Committee on the 29 September 2021 for consideration.

### **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

This Corporate Plan 2019 -2023 identify six clear priority areas of focus for the Council. Ensuring Elected Members representing Ashfield have the knowledge, skills and training is essential to the delivery of its key projects.

### Legal:

Mandatory training is identified in the Council's Constitution, these are elements of training that have been deemed compulsory for participating in regulatory Committees or essential to carrying out the role of a Councillor.

### Finance:

The cost of training identified is to be met from the existing Training & Development budget for members of £10,000.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The existing Member training budget of £10,000 per annum, is to covers all training expenses for 35 Elected Members.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

#### Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Members making decisions without adequate training poses a potential risk to services and projects delivered by the Council. Furthermore, Members interact with the community on a daily basis on issues of community concern.	Development of an inclusive, operational Member Training and Development Strategy that also details monitoring and evaluation of training.

### **Human Resources:**

Ongoing work will be undertaken with Human Resources regarding the development of a Strategy to ensure that it meets the needs of all Members in carrying out their role.

# **Environmental/Sustainability**

No implications identified

# **Equalities:**

Member learning and development activities are open for all Members to attend and it is intended that all such activities should be equally accessible and meet to the Council's equal opportunities policy and practice.

### Other Implications:

None

# Reason(s) for Urgency

None

# Reason(s) for Exemption

None

# **Background Papers**

# Member Development Strategy 2017

# **Report Author and Contact Officer**

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### Member Development Strategy 2017-2021

#### Introduction

Ashfield District Council recognise that to succeed in delivering high quality, cost effective services to the people of Ashfield, it needs well motivated, proactive Councillors with the skills and expertise to drive forward the Council's agenda.

Continuous member development is key to achieving this as all Councillors have a responsibility to learn new skills in line with the ongoing changes in local government. The overarching aim of the strategy is, therefore, to ensure that there is support for all members to enable them to acquire sufficient knowledge and a full range of skills to maximise their ability and capacity.

Arising from this overarching aim the Council has identified the following principles that will underpin how member development is delivered.

- Members will be offered opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and expertise they need to perform their roles effectively.
- Members will be encouraged to take responsibility for and actively seek opportunities for their own learning and development.
- Training and development applies to all members, even those that have been members for some time and feel that there is nothing new to learn.
- Members who take advantage of the opportunities available will be actively encouraged and supported.

This strategy sets out how the overarching aim will be achieved using these principles as the basis for doing so, for example in how access to learning will be ensured.

### **Strategic Context**

This Corporate Plan 2016 -2019 sets out an ambitious programme for the Council over the next three years. It identifies our purpose as;

- The Council exists to serve the communities and residents of Ashfield:
- We will provide good quality, value for money services;
- We will act strategically and plan for the future.

The Values identify a clear commitment to Councillors, stating;

- We value the democratic role that Councillors have in representing the people of Ashfield;
- The Council recognises that the role of a Councillor is challenging and will support Councillors with training to help them deliver their roles;
- The Council will ensure that there is good governance in our democratic processes;
- The Council will keep Councillors of all political parties updated on key issues.

# Aim of the Strategy

This Strategy is designed to provide an overall framework for member development that reflects best practice and achieves the following objectives:

- Provide a range of learning opportunities linked to skills required by Councillors for them to carry out their varied duties;
- Support and enhance the skills of all Elected Members through learning and development;
- Provide equality of opportunity and access to training and development for all Councillors:
- Encourage all members to take advantage of the learning and development opportunities available:
- Ensure that all newly elected members are properly inducted into the Council;
- Raise the profile of Ashfield by ensuring each member has access to training and development which will improve the quality of their role and the service they give to the public;
- Provide training and development at different times and in different ways to suit the diverse needs of Councillors;
- Contribute to the Council's corporate priorities through learning and development.

#### **Roles of Elected Members**

Councillors have personal, individual and collective responsibilities for their council's activities. In addition, as members of political groups or as independents, Councillors will express political values and support the policies of the group to which they belong.

Councillors who are Committee/Panel Chairs or Portfolio Holders have more specialised roles in promoting particular policies, representing the council while at the same time working with other agencies to tackle issues. Members roles include;

### Representing the ward

The primary role of a member is to represent their ward and the people who live in it. They also have a responsibility to communicate Council policy and decisions to people in the ward.

# **Decision-making**

Members have a central part to play in making decisions that impact on their ward and across the whole area covered by the Council. They will be involved in decision-making through:

Council

- Cabinet (Cabinet Members only)
- Regulatory committees such as Planning or Licensing
- Sitting on boards and other groups as appointed to outside bodies

# Policy and strategy development and review

Members influence and determine the development and review of the Council's policies and strategies. They also monitor the Council's performance. They contribute to this through their:

- Role in Overview and Scrutiny
- Involvement in advisory groups and partnerships
- Interaction with Cabinet Members
- Role as a representative on local community groups
- Case work
- Membership of a political group.

# **Overview and Scrutiny**

The Overview and Scrutiny role of Members includes:

- Monitoring and reviewing policy formulation and implementation
- Policy development
- Quality review
- Scrutiny of external bodies and agencies
- Providing a check on the activities of the Cabinet through call-in powers

# **Regulatory Duties**

Local authorities also act as regulators within certain functions and Members may be appointed to special committees that carry out these functions, such as standards, planning and licensing committees. In these roles, members are required to act independently and are not subject to the party group whip. Regulatory committees require Members to undertake mandatory training to carry out the regulatory function of those committees.

Currently Members are required to undertake the following mandatory training;

- Planning
- Licensing (and its sub-committees)
- Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee (and its hearing sub-committee)
- Chief Officers sub committee
- Safeguarding
- Code of Conduct
- Ethical Governance
- Equalities and Diversity
- Any other training that the Council deems as required

### **Community Leadership and Engagement**

Community leadership is at the heart of modern local government and councils are taking on new responsibilities for working in partnership with other organisations, including the voluntary and community sector, to improve services and the quality of life of citizens.

The process for identifying Members' development needs and priorities will be Member-lead with officers bringing to Members' attention any training which is beneficial in carrying out their role. Learning and development priorities will also be assessed collectively in relation to the needs of specific committees and legislative and regulatory requirements.

**Note for Members:** Members could be asked to complete a Training Needs Survey each year to identify what learning and development activities they have found to be effective and to assess what priorities they have for learning and development in the next year. This will then be used to develop and deliver the Member Development Training Plan.

In identifying their priority learning and development needs, Members will be asked to consider outcomes they would like to achieve in relation to the requirements of the Council and achieving the Corporate Plan, personal aspirations and developing core skills.

**Note for Members:** Members may wish to consider an appropriate financial threshold for individual Member training courses. For example £500 equates to 5% of the entire Members training budget.

# How will training be delivered?

Training will be delivered in a variety of forms, including in-house Member Seminars, briefings training at Committee / Panel meetings, E Learning, PowerPoint presentations and by sharing experiences with each other. Bespoke training will be provided by a mixture of internal Officers and external providers as and when necessary.

Additionally, Members can identify themselves external training that may enhance their knowledge and improve their skills in carrying out their role. In these instances Members should notify the Democracy Manager of the training, including details of nature of the course, location and cost.

**Note for Members Consideration:** It may be useful to identify and agree requirements / evaluation method needed to assess relevance of the course and contribution it will make to enhancing Members skills to carry out their role. **Please see Appendix B** 

The suggested Training Needs Survey will also be used to develop and deliver a Member Development Training Plan.

### **Resources and Support**

The Democracy Manager will monitor the budget for Member training and development and evaluate whether it meets the objectives identified within this strategy for Member Development. The 2016/17 budget for Member training and development is £10,000. This incorporates internal, external courses and conferences and seminars.

Courses requiring expenditure must be booked by the Democratic Services Team and reported to the Democracy Manager. Member Development has dedicated support from the Democratic Services Team. It is the role of the Democracy Manager to coordinate the Member Development Program, arrange facilitators, collate feedback and promote Member Development across the Council.

All councillors are aware of this support and are encouraged to contact the team should they wish to go on a course or look to develop an area of skills but are unsure as to how to go about it.

# **Delivering the Member Development Programme**

Member learning and development activities are open for all Members to attend and it is intended that all such activities should be equally accessible and conform to the Council's equal opportunities policy and practice.

In recognition of the varying development needs and preferred learning styles, the member development programme will include a range of delivery methods including workshops, presentations, written resources, and e-learning.

## Timing of in-house Training

Meeting arrangements are flexible in order to provide sessions to accommodate the needs of Members. When additional training or briefing sessions are organised, consideration will be given to the best time of day to schedule the meeting and Members will be consulted where appropriate.

#### **Access to Information and Resources**

All presentations and other materials from development activities and briefing sessions will be made available to all members, including those who could not attend.

Information about up-coming events is provided in writing and by email. Flyers may also be placed in the Members Rooms.

### Working in Partnership

The Council may work with Mansfield District Council to share best practice and deliver training locally to members in the two authorities. The Council will look to share training opportunities with its partners and other local councils such as parish and town councils, as appropriate.

Members' attendance on external training courses is supported where the course is relevant to the member's learning and development needs and is cost-effective. Details of courses and development opportunities will be circulated to all Members to ensure they are available on an equal basis.

Requests for external training will be determined by the Democracy Manager. Requests for training or development which have significant financial or policy implications will be submitted to the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance.

### **Evaluation of Member Development**

All learning and development activities should be evaluated to provide information on effectiveness and value for money. Evaluation of learning and development activities will seek to assess the impact of the training in relation to achieving Members' priority training needs and the impact on the Council in achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan. Following the conclusion of events, Members will be asked to complete a feedback form, which will be issued by the Democracy Manager.

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Where appropriate, follow-up feedback forms, giving Members an opportunity to reflect on how they have put the learning into practice, may be given to Members to complete a few months following a learning and development event, either on paper or electronically.

## **Other Member Development Support**

The Council recognises that effective member development includes support and opportunities in addition to training. The Council will, therefore, provide the following to Members;

- Advice and support within the Democratic Services Team
- Access to IT equipment, information, stationery and office space in the Members' Room / Group Rooms
- Access to relevant Council and other information electronically through the Members Digest

# Appendix B – Draft Pre-Course Evaluation Form



**Note:** To be completed by Councillor and returned to the Democracy Manager prior to the booking of any training / seminars / courses. This form is designed to help assess the added value of courses in carrying out your role as a Councillor for both constituents and the Council.

Course	
Cost Of Course	
Position	Leader / Portfolio Holder / Chairman / Opposition / Scrutiny Member etc etc
How will this course assist you in carrying out your Member role	
How does this course contribute to the Councils priorities	

