

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 2ND NOVEMBER 2006

TRAINING

Report of the: Monitoring Officer

Status: For Consideration

This report supports the Key Aim of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in local government through training and development.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Loney

Head of Service Head of Legal and Committee Services – Christine Nuttall

Recommendation: Members are requested to note and endorse this report.

Background

- 1 The Monitoring Officer is responsible to the Standards Committee for the provision of training to Councillors within the District and the Parish and Town Councils.

Introduction

- 2 In the calendar year 2006 the Monitoring Officer compiled a Training Manual entitled “Standards and Ethics – The Councillor’s Code of Conduct”.
- 3 The Training Manual covers the following topics:
 - a. Guide to Part 111 of the Local Government Act 2000
 - b. How do I register and declare interests and register gifts and hospitality?
 - c. Lobby Groups, dual hatted Members and the Code of Conduct
 - d. The Code to Protect You
 - e. The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct)(England) Order 2001
 - f. The Code of Conduct – Training by Belinda Schwehr
 - g. Standards and Ethics
 - h. The Code in Practice – Training Pack
 - i. Review of the Code of Conduct

Item No. 9

j. Standards Board for England's Most Frequently Asked Questions

Sevenoaks District Council's Standards Committee Reports

- Lobby Groups, dual hatted Members and the Code of Conduct
 - Review of Sanctions
 - The Case Review Number Three
 - The Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future
- 4 Training workshops have been rolled out on a weekly basis for District Councillors and Parish and Town Council Clerks and their Councillors.
- 5 Most of the workshops have been undertaken at the District Council Offices but the Monitoring Officer has also travelled out to some of the outlying parishes.
- 6 At the workshops many of the topics as set out above are discussed and the Standards Board for England's second training video entitled "The Code to Protect You" is utilised along with the DVD on how to conduct an Investigation and Hearing. Everyone who attends a workshop receives a copy of the Training Manual.

Success

- 7 The training workshops appear to be a great success with the course objectives being met in all cases.
- 8 A large number of District Council Members have undergone the training as well as Parish and Town Council Members and Clerks.
- 9 Training is continuing up until the end of the calendar year 2006.

Future Proposals

- 10 The Monitoring Officer intends to continue the training workshops next year starting in the spring and throughout the induction process for new Members and thereafter until the end of 2007.
- 11 The workshops will also be rolled out to staff within the Council and already workshops are being organised for the Committee Services Team of the Council and Heads of Service.
- 12 It is hoped and anticipated that the next round of workshops in the spring of 2007 will be able to incorporate training on the new Code of Conduct.
- 13 The Monitoring Officer is looking towards partnering with other local authorities within the vicinity to enhance and provide variety in respect of ethical training.

Key Implications

Financial Implications

- 14 Training sessions have been accommodated within the Council's existing training budget. The anticipated partnership training arrangement should enhance training and provide additional capacity at no extra cost.

Legal Implications

- 15 Training for Members in respect of the Code of Conduct and generally in respect of the ethical framework is an essential part of the Standards Committee's responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.

Conclusions

- 16 Training is essential to enable Members to acquire the key competencies to comply with the Model Code of Conduct and to significantly enhance good Corporate Governance.

Sources of Information: Training material from the Standards Board for England

Training Manual

Standards Board for England's video

Standards Board for England's DVD

Contact Officer(s): Christine Nuttall – ext. 7245

Dr. Pav Ramewal
Corporate Resources Director

RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Training and development is essential in order to achieve high standards of conduct in public life and is part of the Council's commitment towards good corporate governance.

