

**Name of meeting: Standards Committee**

**Date: 7 March 2018**

**Title of report: Update on Standards**

**Purpose of report**

To consider further training and support needs following the Standards Review and new code of Conduct to be implemented following Annual Council on 24 May 2017.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</a> ?	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?	N/A
Date signed off by Director & name	
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance, IT and Transactional Services?	
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Yes – 27 February 2018
Cabinet member portfolio	

**Electoral wards affected: N/A**

**Ward councillors consulted: N/A**

**Public or private: Public**

**1. Summary**

1.1 At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the committee considered a number of issues following the changes to the Code of Conduct and Standards process. In particular:

1.2

1.2.1 Its increased involvement in considering training and support for Members,

1.2.2 the role of the Committee in setting expectations in relation to behaviours,

1.2.3 reviewing the effectiveness of the Standards process and

1.2.4 the role of the Chair of Standards in decision making

1.2.5 to consider an update on any complaints received since the new process was adopted as well as

1.2.6 any plans for future work.

It was agreed that the report be noted and that further consideration be given to the matters identified regarding Member conduct and training.

1.2 Following that meeting a meeting took place with members of the Standards Committee as well as Group Business Managers where a number of issues were considered relating to behaviours and expectations.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to consider the outstanding matters following the amendments to the Standards process in Kirklees which were agreed by Council on 26 April 2017:

1. Training following the outcome of the standards discussion with GBM's
2. Review of CPR's and any relevant training required
3. Role of Induction – new signing of the Code of Conduct
4. Training for existing members on new code

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

2.1 At the 26 April 2017 Council meeting the Council considered reports from the Standards Committee and Corporate Governance & Audit Committee which set out the outcome of a review of the Standards process in Kirklees and set out a number of recommendations to change the way in which complaints about Members behaviour would be considered in the future. A link to the report is attached:

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/documents/s18043/Item%209%20-%20Report%20a.pdf>. It is a comprehensive report and made 17 recommendations.

2.2 A separate report has been submitted to the Committee outlining the details of the complaints received and how they were dealt with since the changes have been implemented.

2.3 The role of the Committee was amended to give it a higher profile and additional responsibilities were added. This included an obligation to meet 6 monthly to consider reports regarding Member behaviour and complaints received, to meet annually for a review meeting and to highlight training needs of Members. Members supported the role of Standards Committee and felt it served a very important purpose.

2.4 It was also agreed that Members should be required to have appropriate training in relation to expectations around behaviours and members of Standards Committee are asked to consider some options in relation to how this might take place.

### Training Needs and other support

2.5 Currently Members receive some training when appointed as new Councillors about the Standards process and expectations. Members who are the subject of a Standards decision may also be required to undertake training. Over and above that there is no other formal training or reminder about expectations. Information is shared at Group Business Manager meetings about any recent decisions elsewhere which might impact on Councillor behaviour so for example – First tier tribunal decision relating to Council tax payments.

### **Council Procedure Rules**

2.6 During the year there was a discussion on Standards with the Committee and the Group Business Managers. At this meeting it was

agreed that some further training on the CPR's would be helpful to members following some confusion about the use of some of the CPRs.

- i. What kind of training would be most effective for members?  
Online training, short reminder sessions?
- ii. How do we enforce some of those things? Do we enforce them?  
Do we do it specifically in groups?

2.7 Following the discussion it was suggested that it may be helpful for Members to be reminded of the Member/Officer protocol.

### **Reasonable Behaviour Policy**

2.8 This new policy was agreed at Council in November 2017. A request for chairing skills training (in particular chairing meetings where there may be difficult or unreasonable behaviour) was made and is in the process of being organised. This should complement other training for Chairs. Officers are currently organising a session for nominated chairs of the various committees which will also be part of the induction pack for new councillors in late spring.

### **Social Media**

2.9 This is an area which has continued to arise in many different forums and within the complaints recently received. Although, Social Media Guidelines have been agreed and circulated it may well be that Councillors could be reminded again or provided with some training.

2.10 Members views are sought on the following: -

- iii. What kind of training would be most effective for members?  
Online training, short reminder sessions?
- iv. How do we enforce some of those things? Do we enforce them?  
Do we do it specifically in groups?
- v. Do Members feel there are any further the issues within their groups relating to behaviours and expectations? Are there any themes within groups?

2.11 Members are invited to make suggestions.

### **Role of Induction – Signing of new Code of Conduct**

2.12 Following the standards review it was agreed that new Councillors would sign the Code of Conduct. This has been taken forward by Officers and is currently with the Communications team to design an appropriate form for signing that will be kept by the Monitoring Officer. This will be sent to Committee members for approval once received. It is anticipated this will be in place for the municipal year.

### **Training for Existing Members on the New Code**

2.13 Training for existing members has not yet begun in relation to this. It was acknowledged in the standards discussion that members may prefer training in a form which they can access at a suitable time for

them. However, it is important that existing members are made aware of the training.

- 2.14 Officers will shortly be liaising with the Learning and Organisational development team to take this forward and organise some on-line tutorials for members. They will then be asked to complete the training within a suitable timeline to make sure they are familiar with the Code.

### **How will the requirement for training be enforced?**

- 2.15 The decision at April Council was that members be required to '*attend appropriate training on the new code and standards process*'. There was no reference to how this be enforced although the assumption would be through groups. Member's views are sought on that

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

N/A

### **3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)**

N/A

### **3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children**

N/A

### **3.4 Reducing demand of services**

N/A

### **3.5 (Other eg. Legal/Financial )**

- 3.1 It is important that Members set a good example in the way that they behave and conduct themselves in public and we keep this under review. There are no specific HR and/or any legal or financial implications.

## **4. Consultees and their opinions**

N/A

## **5. Next steps**

If agreed:

- i. Developing a programme of training and support for Members.
- ii. Continue to monitor the number of complaints received and whether that establishes any trends

## **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

Members comment on the proposals for training and support for members, make any suggestions themselves and make recommendations to officers to develop a programme of support and training.

## **7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation**

N/A

**8. Contact officer**

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**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

**N/A**

**10. Service Director responsible**

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