

SUBJECT:	Review of standards training for new councillors
REPORT OF:	Head of Legal and Democratic Services

1. Purpose of Report

To report on the induction and training provided for new councillors on standards matters following the elections in May.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

There are no direct links to the Council's main policy objectives. But the Council has a duty under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members. Ensuring that all members (particularly new members to the Council) understand their obligations under the Council's code of conduct, and other adopted protocols, is a matter of good governance and is important in preserving the confidence of local communities.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a recommendation from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a member induction programme was put in place by council officers for all councillors elected in May. A copy of this programme is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 Members will note that a specific session on governance and standards was held on 20 May. This was attended by 6 new members and 4 returning members. In addition, standards issues relevant to the Council's planning functions were covered in the Planning Briefing on 14 May. This was attended by 6 new members and 6 returning members. Copies of the presentation slides and briefing notes for each of these sessions were circulated to those members who were unable to attend. One new member was away for the governance and standards training and the monitoring officer is arranging a 1 to 1 session.
- 4.2 A copy of the Council's code of conduct was included in the Induction Pack circulated to all members, together with the form for notifying disclosable pecuniary and other non-pecuniary interests. The monitoring officer has prepared a detailed Guide for members on the code which is attached at Appendix 2 and quick guides on the following topics: personal and prejudicial interests; lobbying; disclosing confidential information; gifts and hospitality and charitable trustees and declarations of interest. Hard copies of these guidance materials were given to members attending the Welcome Day on 12 May and will be published on the standards pages of the Council's website.
- 4.3 The monitoring officer considers that an interactive workshop on declarations of interest and pre-determination when members can work through examples would be helpful, particularly for members on regulatory committees. It is suggested that this workshop is held in the autumn and could be a joint event with Chiltern members, as both Councils have the adopted the same model code of conduct.

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

Financial – The cost of any further workshops would be met from within existing budgets

Legal – As set out in the report

Risks issues – Members could be at risk of complaints if they fail to comply with the Localism Act and code of conduct and the Council's decision would be at risk of challenge if they are taken with bias or pre-determination

Equalities - None specific

6. Recommendations

That the Committee note the position and consider the monitoring officer's suggestion for an interactive workshop on declarations of interest and pre-determination and the need/desirability of any further standards training for members

Portfolio Holder	N/A
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Background Papers:	None except those referred to in the report