

Standards Committee 5 June 2018

Training at Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils Conference April 2018

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

To note the presentation given to the Bucks and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils Conference on 19 April 2018.

Reason for Decision

To inform Standards Committee of training provided to Town and Parish councils.

Corporate Implications

1. The Localism Act requires WDC to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and co-opted members, and Standards Committee's terms of reference include advising, training or arranging the training of Members and Co-opted Members of the District Council on matters relating to the authority's Code of Conduct. Standards Committee has an important role to play in the latter stages of conduct complaints against Parish and Town members as well as District Members, and therefore a role in encouraging good standards of behaviour to keep breaches of the Code of Conduct to a minimum.
2. The Monitoring Officer's wider role includes generally helping to support high standards of conduct and supporting ways in which this can be done. Parish and Town councils within Wycombe District are members of B&MKALC and its 2018 Conference has relevance for those authorities as well as others across the wider Buckinghamshire area.

Executive Summary

3. This report informs members of training provided designed to promote good working relationships, and therefore good conduct, within Buckinghamshire including WDC's district.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

4. Supporting good conduct helps to promote the Council's commitment in the Corporate Plan to ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and principles of good governance.

Background and Issues

5. On 19 April 2018 on the invitation of the Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Council's County Officer, the District Solicitor/Monitoring Officer addressed the Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (B&MKALC)

Conference on Respect, Trust and Working Relationships, which had been arranged by B&MKALC with the intention of promoting good working relationships in town and parish councils belonging to B&MKALC. The topic covered was the Role of the Monitoring Officer and the Code of Conduct. B&MKALC of course includes within its membership town and parish councils from within WDC's area. Particular aspects of the topic covered included:

- how current Codes of Conduct for members have arisen historically;
- the role of the Monitoring Officer, both generally and specifically with regard to member conduct complaints handling;
- the role of the Independent Persons within that framework;
- declarations of interest;
- declarations of gifts and hospitality;
- sanctions for breach of the Code, and
- the complaints process.

Two particularly key areas emphasised were the importance of the Nolan Principles, which continue to underpin concepts of good and ethical behaviour and remain the cornerstone of the language used in Codes of Conduct locally, and key areas of conduct to focus upon. Copies of the presentation can be circulated to members.

6. Other main speakers at the event and the topics they covered were:

- Paul Hoey of Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd – Dealing with Difficult Situations
- Jonathan Owen - CEO of NALC (National Association of Local Councils) - The National Landscape
- Rob Smith – Chief Executive of SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) - Standards and Behaviour from the Clerk's Perspective
- Vicky Jacomb – Came and Company – Insurance policy implications for problematic behaviour.

7. Carole Burslem of B&MKALC has fed back that overall the conference was received very positively and attendees considered that it had had a helpful effect in promoting understanding and informing town and parish members in accordance with the aims of the conference.

Options

8. None, the report is for noting only.

Next Steps

9. Standards Committee will continue to monitor standards and ethics training provided as part of its terms of reference.

Background Papers

None.