

Committee: STANDARDS

Agenda Item

Date: 9 March 2015

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Title: TRAINING

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report is to inform members of the proposals for training councillors with regard to standards issues.

Recommendations

2. That members consider the proposals and determine whether they consider them adequate and if not what further matters they would wish to see covered or further training provided.

Financial Implications

3. None.

Background Papers

4. None.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Parish and town clerks have been asked to note the dates for training for their new members. If any further dates are added these will be notified to the town and parish clerks as soon as such dates have been set.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.

Workforce/Workplace	None.
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Situation

6. Elections will be held for the district council and the parish and town councils within the district on the 7 May 2015. Inevitably there will be a number of new councillors at both district and parish/town level. It is not yet known how many contests there are likely to be at parish and town level. However, all parish councils have a specified number of councillors. If there are insufficient candidates to fill all positions on a council then the council has a duty to endeavour to co-opt members to bring it up to its full strength.
7. All councillors are of course bound by the Code of Conduct. Training is therefore more than desirable for new councillors. It should also be offered as a refresher to existing councillors and to parish and town clerks.
8. The district council will be holding an induction session for new members on the 15 May 2015. This will include a presentation on the Code of Conduct. This will be repeated on the evening of the 18 May and I intend to invite all councillors (whether they have had previous experience or not) to attend that session should they wish to do so.
9. I have booked the council chamber to provide training for the towns and parishes at the council offices on the 20 and 28 May in the evenings. I intend to invite any district councillors who have not received training to attend either of those meetings should they wish to do so. In the event that there are a large number of councillors in the south of the district I shall explore the viability of hiring Foakes Hall at Dunmow which may be a more convenient venue for new councillors from the southern parishes.
10. The training will take the form of a Powerpoint presentation. I intend covering the following issues:
 - I. The historic background as to why we have legislation relating to conduct.
 - II. The requirements when adopting a Code of Conduct.
 - III. When the Code applies.
 - IV. The provisions of the Code of Conduct.
 - V. Registration of interests.
 - VI. Dispensations.
 - VII. Complaints procedure.
 - VIII. Sanctions for breach of the Code.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
District parish and town councillors are not familiar with the Code of Conduct.	3, whilst historically it has been possible to train most district councillors there has been resistance on the part of some members to attend training and 5 of the current members are believed not to have received training on the current Code. When the Localism Act came into effect less than 16% of the parish and town councillors attended training sessions.	3, councils whose members do not observe the Code are likely to suffer reputational damage.	Other than offering training it is difficult to see what steps the council can take to ensure compliance with the Code.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.