

COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Cllr Avril Kerswell

DATE: 15 October 2018

REPORT OF: Chairman of Standards Committee and the Interim Monitoring Officer

SUBJECT: UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

PART I

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council is asked to receive this update on Standards matters and note the Code of Conduct training to which all Members should make best endeavours to attend.

1. PURPOSE

This report is to update Members on:-

- a) the current position regarding the work of the Standards Committee; and
- b) the adopted Code of Conduct for Members in particular regarding proposed training for Members on Standards issues and formal complaints.

2. BACKGROUND

This report follows on from the update to Full Council on 22 February 2018 regarding the current position of the work of the Standards Committee and Code of Conduct.

3. CURRENT ACTIONS

3.1 Standards/Code of Conduct Training

The Council has engaged Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd to provide Code of Conduct/standards training to all Members.

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Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd was set up in 2012 by its co-directors Paul Hoey and Natalie Ainscough to support local authorities following the abolition of Standards for England.

They provide authoritative advice and guidance to individual authorities on standards procedures and individual cases and share good practice on standards issues through a subscription website.

They specialise in training for members and officers on standards, investigating high-profile, complex and contentious standards cases, doing detailed governance reviews of parish councils and reviewing local Codes of Conduct and case-handling procedures for local authorities.

Since setting up in 2012 they have helped representatives from over 400 authorities on all aspects of the standards framework.

They also work with national representative bodies on standards-related policy issues, including the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and organise and speak at national conferences.

Paul Hoey - Paul previously worked extensively for central government nationally and internationally for over 20 years in a range of policy roles including over ten years as the director in charge of strategy and stakeholder relations at Standards for England. He has been the acknowledged national expert on the local government standards framework for the last decade and has given expert evidence to both the Parliamentary Select Committee and Committee on Standards in Public Life enquiries into local government standards.

Natalie Ainscough - Natalie had worked on public policy development for various Government agencies, including nearly 6 years at Standards for England in a key policy role developing and implementing an evolving local standards framework where she led a multi-disciplinary team in the development of statutory guidance. She has experience of working with senior politicians and officers at national and local level and extensive knowledge of negotiating at the highest political levels across parties. She is a specialist in understanding Parliamentary procedures and advising senior figures on how to influence political and civil service thinking at senior levels.

Training Content - The training will look at why an authority needs to have a code of conduct and why standards in public life matter. The training will then explore, through interactive discussion with members, a number of real case scenarios. This will be divided into two parts:

The first part will be the behavioural aspects of the Code, exploring the issues around public and private conduct, use of social media, respect, confidential information etc.

The second part will look at the principles and rules around registration and declaration of interests and predetermination, again with case studies.

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The intention is to run two training sessions on Tuesday 6 November 2018, so Members can chose to attend either the morning or afternoon session.

The intention is to repeat this training in May/June 2019 as part of the Induction Programme for all new members and as a refresher for re-elected Members.

3.2 Complaints

The Chairman of Standards Committee recently met with the Interim Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person to discuss the current complaints against member of both Teignbridge District Council and members of parish and town councils in the district.

Some of these complaints will now be the subject of a formal investigation the findings of which may, in due course, be presented to the Standards Committee.

Members of the Standards Committee will, in the near future, be invited to an informal meeting to review its working practices and procedures in readiness to receive any reports that may follow-on from the formal investigations.

Cllr Rosalind Prowse
Chairman

Justin Price-Jones
Interim Monitoring Officer
Sarah Selway – Democratic Services

BELOW TO BE FILLED IN BY THE REPORT AUTHOR:

Wards affected	
Contact for any more information	Sarah Selway Democratic Services 01626 215159
Background Papers (For Part I reports only)	
Key Decision	N
In Forward Plan	N
In O&S Work Programme	N
Community Impact Assessment attached:	N
Appendices attached:	N/A