

1 REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 2 OCTOBER 2008

MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2008/09 – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE/LICENSING COMMITTEE

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Standards Committee on 2 October 2008 to Full Council with recommendations relating to Member attendance at planning-related training sessions and licensing training. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Head of Information and Customer Services to the Committee is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 During discussion, the Committee felt that:-
- planning training should include specific training on the subject of planning grounds for approval or refusal of a planning application.
 - Members of the Licensing Committee should receive appropriate licensing training prior to participating in Licensing hearings.
 - Reference to the requirements of mandatory planning training should be 'subject to the availability of training'.
 - If adopted by Council, further information would be necessary on how the requirement that Members attend two planning-related training sessions and that Licensing Committee Members receive appropriate training will be implemented and enforced.
- 1.3 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**
- (1) That attendance at two planning training sessions totalling 4 hours a year, or the making of alternative training arrangements with officers if unable to attend scheduled sessions, be a mandatory requirement of membership of the Development Control Committee in the next municipal year.
 - (2) That it be mandatory that Members of the Licensing Committee receive appropriate licensing training prior to participating in Licensing hearings in the next municipal year.
 - (3) That further information be provided relating to how the mandatory requirement that Members attend two planning-related training sessions and that Licensing Committee Members receive appropriate training be implemented, taking into account the availability of training, and enforced. (HICS)

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6 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The importance that should be placed on Members appointed to quasi judicial bodies/bodies where decisions have to take account of legislative and regulatory control has been a feature of discussions with Audit Commission inspectors during the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.
- 6.2 The Audit Commission inspectors were advised that in 2006 the Council set up a Sub-Committee to review the operation/process of the then Planning Services Committee (now Development Control Committee). The review resulted in a recommendation that all Members of the Development Control Committee should attend two mandatory planning training sessions totalling 4 hours in each municipal year, or make alternative training arrangements with officers if unable to attend scheduled sessions, otherwise sanctions might be considered. In considering the recommendation at that time Council agreed that the term 'mandatory' and reference to sanctions should be removed.
- 6.3 Last year the Standards Committee raised concern that a high number of Members were not complying with the set requirement that all Members should attend two planning training sessions totalling 4 hours in each year, following which the Monitoring Officer wrote to non-attending Members drawing their attention to the need for attendance and recommending that they make every effort to meet this requirement.
- 6.4 In view of the above, it is suggested that the Standards Committee may feel it appropriate to recommend to Full Council that attendance at two planning-related training sessions totalling 4 hours is mandatory for the retention of membership of the Development Control Committee.
- 6.5 The situation with regard to other bodies such as the Licensing Committee could be considered at a later point, if appropriate.