

Standards Committee – 28 March 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **28 March 2018** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr R R Dray
Cllr D S Efde

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mrs L Walker

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs D Hoy, M Hoy and Mrs L Shaw.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E O K Mason, P A Beckers, Mrs D A Constable and Mr P Scott.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr J R F Mason for Cllr E O K Mason

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bostock - Assistant Director, Democratic Services
M Power - Democratic Services Officer

67 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 and the Standards Sub-Committee held on 23 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

68 REPORT OF THE MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP IN RELATION TO MANDATORY PLANNING TRAINING 2018/19

The Committee considered the report of the Working Group.

The Chairman of the Working Group, Cllr Mrs C M Mason, presented a summary of the decisions and recommendations of the Working Group and thanked Group Members for their hard work. In respect of 2018/19 and future years training, dates had been spaced over the full municipal year, albeit with a concentration of induction training at the start of the municipal year. The Group had considered and clarified guidelines around scheduled breaks within training courses and the optimum length of courses. The post-course evaluation form had been redesigned and new arrangements for return of the form following

training would ensure that Members' comments would not be seen by the trainer and would be reviewed in confidence by the Working Group to inform the following year's training programme.

Arrangements for planning training had been considered and recommendations made that would differentiate between experienced and newer Councillors. The Group recommended that the current arrangement whereby an application for dispensation could be made to a tribunal of the Standards Committee for non-attendance at planning training be discontinued.

In response to questions, Cllr Mrs C M Mason confirmed the following:-

- That experienced Members (who had served as a Member of the Development Committee for at least two years out of the last six years and had attended at least six training sessions) would be obliged to attend just one training session each year, as it was felt that more experienced Members were able to determine the extent to which they needed training. Arrangements could be reviewed in the event of an all-out election.
- That, because the planning courses had been spread to take place throughout the year, there was opportunity to schedule training if needed in the event of changes in planning legislation that occurred during the course of the year.
- That an induction training course was scheduled to take place on 17 May, prior to the first Development Committee meeting, which all Members newly elected to the Committee would be required to attend.
- That potential substitutes on the Committee without the qualifying two years' experience as a Member of the Development Committee would have to fulfil the requirement that they must not miss two consecutive planning training courses offered to remain eligible to sit on the Development Committee as a Substitute.

It was noted that, in addition to the planning training provided, each Development Committee report provided detailed information on individual planning applications; in addition, there was an officer briefing at Committee meetings.

Members agreed that, in future, the term 'mandatory' need not be used when describing the planning training offered.

It was unanimously:-

Resolved

- (1) That 'experienced' Members be defined as having served on the Development Committee for two years (out of the previous six years as an elected Member, including Members returning to the Council in that period

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who have had previous Development Committee training/experience) and have attended six or more training sessions.

- (2) That when a Member had achieved the requirement in (1) above they would be required to attend only any one of the planning training sessions offered each municipal year.
- (3) That newly elected Councillors or those Councillors new to the Development Committee (or who may wish to substitute) must attend the initial induction planning training held in May (in those years where there is a District Council election) before being eligible to sit on the Development Committee as a Member or Substitute. (This session would be available to all Members as a 'refresher' session and would qualify as a mandatory session for Members attending.)
- (4) That newer Members (those who did not fulfil the requirements in (1) above) must not miss two consecutive planning training courses offered to remain eligible to sit on the Development Committee as a Member or Substitute. If two or more consecutive sessions were missed, a Member would be ineligible to sit on the Development Committee as a voting Member until such a time as they had attended another session.
- (5) That, in addition to the induction planning training held in May in the three years when there are District Council elections, a minimum of two planning courses be held each year.
- (6) That two sessions continue to be offered for each scheduled training course: one to be held in either the morning or afternoon and one to be held in the evening.
- (7) That the current arrangement of an application for dispensation to a Tribunal of the Standards Committee be discontinued but that if there were exceptional circumstances as to why a Member has been unable to attend the required number of training sessions, and subject to officer availability, a request could be made via the Standards Committee for a session with the officer.

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm.

Chairman

Date

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