

CHESHIRE EAST

Standards Committee

Date of meeting: 7 October 2008
Report of: Governance Group
Title: Standards Committee – Proposed Training Programme

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline the proposed training programme for the Standards Committee.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to endorse the proposed training programme and settle dates for the two proposed events.

3.0 Information

- 3.1 The promotion of high standards of conduct in the new authority is an extremely important role. Dealing with alleged breaches of the Code is equally important. It is therefore vital that all members of the Committee receive training in order to help them fulfil these roles. It will be essential for the Standards Committee members to be fully conversant with their role on the Committee, and any Assessment, Hearing or Review Sub-Committees.
- 3.2 All members need to understand their roles and responsibilities when they are sitting on an Assessment Sub-Committee where a decision is taken in relation to a complaint in accordance with agreed criteria. If they are dealing with a review at a Review Sub-Committee, they must not have taken part in the initial decision to take no action and must not be influenced by the earlier decision. Full hearings require a detailed understanding of the processes leading up to the hearing, and the 3 stages of findings the Committee need to consider at a hearing.
- 3.3 At the last meeting, the Committee was advised that it would be the full Standards Committee that would require training and awareness and therefore work in this area would start once the Independent and Parish members had been appointed.

4.0 Proposed Training Programme

- 4.1 Initially, it is suggested that training take place on two occasions:
- **January 2009** – Possibly prior to the first meeting of the full Committee on a date to be arranged, it is proposed that an induction session be

held. Depending on the areas to be covered this will be for 1.5 hours. The aim of this session will be to introduce members of the Committee to each other.

- **February 2009** – A full day session to provide detailed training on dealing with complaints and will cover the assessment process, local hearings and reviews. This training will be vital for the Committee to fulfil its role.

4.2 It is proposed that the full day session follow the draft programme below:

10.00 – 10.30	Introduction
10.30 – 11.15	Assessment of a Complaint
11.15 – 12.00	Learning Points
12.00 – 1.00	Reviewing a Complaint
1.00 – 1.45	Lunch
1.45 – 2.00	Hearing Procedure
2.00 – 3.45	Mock Hearing
3.45 – 4.00	Feedback and Close

5.0 Standards Board for England's Annual Conference

- 5.1 The annual conference offers a valuable training opportunity and has been useful in the past as away of raising awareness and identifying best practice. This year's conference is fully booked but budgetary provision will be sought to enable some members to attend next year.

6.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 6.1 The costs of the proposed training will be met from within existing resources.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 Future training costs (including any external training) will need to be built into the Committee's budgetary process in order to ensure that Committee members are properly equipped to meet the demanding nature of their role.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council needs to discharge its functions lawfully and to have an appropriately trained Standards Committee is a way of ensuring this.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 The training programme detailed will help manage the risk of the Council failing to meet its legal obligations.

7.0 Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues

- 7.1 The Committee needs to be able to deal with complaints about Cheshire East Councillors during 2008/2009. It needs to be able to deal with complaints against Parish Councillors within the Cheshire East area from 1 April 2009. Training for this role will mean there is proper preparation for all Day One, Year One and Term one Issues.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

N/a