

CHESHIRE EAST

Standards Committee

Date of meeting: 25 November 2008
Report of: Deputy Interim Monitoring Officer
Title: Code of Conduct Training for new Cheshire East Members

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the outcome of and feedback from the recent training of new members on the Code of Conduct.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To note the Code of Conduct training of 8 new Members on 27th October 2008 and that 4 new Members still require training
- 2.2 To confirm that Code of Conduct training should be given to new Members as a matter of priority following their election
- 2.3 To confirm that new members should be given individual guidance on the completion of their initial Registration of Interests form
- 2.4 To support the supply to new members of a specimen Registration of Interests form showing some typical entries

3.0 Introduction

Code of Conduct training is an essential part of the overall training need for all members. A short training session on the Code of Conduct was included in the initial induction day attended by most Cheshire East members on 7th May 2008.

Code Training is especially important for new members. Cheshire East Council has 12 “new” members ie members who are not currently elected members of one of the constituent authorities. A training seminar was conducted for them on 27th October 2008 by Mr Peter Sutton, Deputy Interim Monitoring Officer of Cheshire East Council. The seminar was attended by 8 Members which means that there are still 4 new Members remaining to be trained.

The training appeared to be well received and appreciated by the members and feedback from them is set out below. A particular point of concern is that following the seminar 6 out of the 8 Members realised that their Registration of Interests forms were inaccurate and took the opportunity to immediately amend their forms.

4.0 Feedback from Members

Feedback from members was as follows:

- Appreciation of the importance of the Code, especially in respect of Registration and Declaration of Interests
- Appreciation of the seriousness of the consequences of breaches of the Code

- Concern that full Code training had not taken place much sooner after their election
- Concern that they had not been given more individual guidance in completing the Registration of Interests forms
- Some members had not appreciated that their own home needed to be registered
- Some members had not appreciated that membership of a political party and payment of election expenses needed to be registered

This feedback is reflected in the recommendations made.

5.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

5.1 None – the training was provided from within existing resources.

6.0 Future Implication 2009/10 and beyond

6.1 This will depend on future training programmes and whether they are delivered in-house or externally.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 Members are at risk of personal action if they fail to adhere to the Code.

7.2 Breaches of the Code may contribute to the likelihood of legal challenges to Council decisions.

8.0 Risk Assessment

8.1 Effective training of Members on the Code is believed to drastically reduce the risk of breaches of the Code occurring, which should result in fewer referrals to the Standards Committee and reduced likelihood of legal challenges to Council decisions.

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

9.1 The need for training of members on the Code will be a constant one.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

N/a