

Report of : Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item	Ward(s)
Council	15 July 2010		All

Delete appropriate	as	Exempt	Non-exempt
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Subject: Standards Awareness Raising Programme

1. Synopsis

The Standards Committee is responsible for publicising and explaining the requirements of the Code of Conduct places on members to the public, partners and external stakeholders. This report proposes an internal and external awareness raising programme that promotes understanding and awareness of the Code and the principles of public life which underlie it.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the draft Awareness Raising Programme in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To approve the programme with such amendments as the committee considers appropriate

3. Background Details

- 3.1 It is one of the terms of reference of the Standards Committee to publicise and explain the requirements the Code of Conduct places on members to the public, partners and external stakeholders. A proposed Raising Plan is contained in appendix 1. The plan has been put together with the following objectives and considerations in mind.

- 3.2 **Bulletins to members:** A significant number of new councillors have joined the council as a result of the recent local elections. The induction process for councillors has included training for members on the Code of Conduct and new on-line training programme has been developed to enable them to consolidate their understanding. To further support that process it is considered it may be helpful for members to receive a series of bulletins covering the key areas of the code, drawing on the Standards for England Guidance and examples from published decided cases.
- 3.2 **Bulletin to officers:** Past ethical governance surveys have indicated a reasonable degree of awareness amongst officers of the Code of Conduct governing members' behaviour. A reminder of the main provisions of the code will help ensure that awareness is maintained. It is proposed that this be achieved through a reminder in ICnews for all staff with a more detailed bulletin for senior officers.
- 3.3 **The public:** from time to time the Standards Committee and its members undertake activities that highlight to the public the importance the council attaches to high ethical standards amongst members and the contents of the Code. For example Standards Committee members have presented the annual report of the committee to Council and to the area committees and from time to time articles have appeared in the local press. The draft Awareness Raising Plan includes proposals for an interview with the chair of the Standards Committee to be included in the Council's Magazine, Islington Now or in one of more local paper. In addition it is proposed that a briefing note concerning the Code and standards in public life be prepared with the intention that schools in the borough have it available as part of the citizenship lessons.

4. Implications

4.1 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from the report but it is hoped that the Awareness Raising Plan will support members in their compliance with the Members Code of Conduct.

4.2 Financial Implications

Any costs will have to be met from within existing budgets.

4.3 Equality Impact Assessment

The communications proposed in this report will include consideration and promotion of the requirement in the Code that members must not do anything which may cause the council to breach any of the equality enactments.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant environmental implications arising directly from this report. The proposed member bulletins on aspects of the Code will be circulated electronically.

Background papers:

None.

Final Report Clearance

Signed by

Date

Corporate Director of Resources

Received by

Date

Head of Scrutiny and Democratic Services

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