



Report of: Acting Director of Law and Governance

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Audit Committee	2 September 2019	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt
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Subject: ANNUAL REPORT ON STANDARDS AND MEMBER CONDUCT

1. Synopsis

In accordance with the Audit Committee Terms of Reference, the Monitoring Officer is required to submit to the committee an annual report concerning standards of member conduct, including a summary of complaints received under the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and their outcome. The complaints received in the municipal year 2018-9 are detailed below. This report also includes information on member training and development and declarations of interest.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the contents of the report.

3. Details

3.1 Member Training and Development

3.2 Prior to the Local Government elections on 3 May 2018 a review of member induction arrangements was undertaken and a new member induction programme developed. The programme was open to newly elected and returning councillors and included a full

Induction Day on Saturday 5 May, during which member's IT was set up, photographs taken for the website and identity badges were issued. The councillors received training in local government finance, the members code of conduct, registering and declaring interests, governance, data protection and management, their role in a civil emergency and received advice and information about member support arrangements and committee meeting procedures.

- 3.3 As part of the revised induction arrangements a new suite of documents was created for members, including a document on each council department that summarised the work the department undertakes and the key contacts, key council policy documents, such as the Corporate Plan, protocols, codes, IT guides and useful forms. The new and updated documents were made available to all members on a shared members area on Office 365. The documents are regularly refreshed and added to as there is interest or need. The scrutiny committee review reports have recently been added.
- 3.4 The Induction Day was followed by a member development programme, which continues and which included training sessions on personal safety, casework management, safeguarding, corporate parenting, committee member specific training for Licensing, Planning and Audit Committees, housing allocations, effective scrutiny and a range of other subjects. Members received a survey in October 2018, the results of which will guide the ongoing programme of continuous development opportunities.
- 3.5 There is a small budget available for external training and conference attendance, which is divided between the Executive and backbench members to ensure it is fairly allocated. Councillors attended a number of conferences, including Combatting Gangs, Violence and Weapons Crime, Next steps for reducing plastic waste, the National Children and Adult Services Conference, Strategies for success - Local Government Scrutiny, Street Drugs in the Big Smoke and the LGA Annual Conference. One of the Councillors completed the LGA Leadership course and backbench councillors attended the LGA BAME, Young Councillor and Women Councillors weekenders and ten councillors attended public speaking training.
- 3.6 Information about free of charge and subsidised development opportunities, provided by London Councils and the Local Government Association, were regularly circulated to Members.
- 3.7 Members were also provided with specific advice on governance issues from time to time, including advice regarding declarations of interest and information governance.
- 3.8 **Financial Declarations**
- 3.9 All Members reviewed, confirmed and where necessary, updated their register of interests, including their financial declarations, in March 2019. The Members Register of Interests is available on the Council's website.
- 3.10 The Members interests, declarations of interest made at meetings, declarations regarding gifts and hospitality and the councillors' attendance record at committee meetings are all available on the Council's website.

3.11 Complaints

3.12 All complaints under the Members Code of Conduct are referred to the Monitoring Officer (the Director of Law and Governance). Following consideration of the complaint, the Monitoring Officer decides whether it is appropriate to seek an informal resolution.

Where there is no informal resolution, the Monitoring Officer may:

- decide not to investigate further;
- decide that the matter requires investigation.
- decide to refer the decision as to whether or not there is to be an investigation to the Standards Committee.

3.13 No formal complaints have been received against Members during 2018-19 relating to breaches of the Members Code of Conduct, although some issues have been raised which have not reached that stage, as follows:

Members involved	Complainant	Topic	Formal complaint	Outcome
1	Member of the public	Conduct of a councillor	N	The complainant did not proceed with the complaint after the initial response and provision of the Members Code of Conduct.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

The Council spent £8,863 on training courses for councillors in the 2018/19 financial year.

4.2 Legal Implications

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members (section 27(1) Localism Act 2011). The Council has adopted a Code dealing with the conduct that is expected of Members and Co-opted Members when they are acting in that capacity (as required by section 27(2) Localism Act 2011).

4.3 Resident Impact Assessment

No resident impacts arise directly from this report.

Appendices: Appendix 1 Member Development Programme

Background papers: None.

Final Report Clearance

Signed by



7 August 2019

Acting Director of Law and Governance

Date

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