



Report of the City Solicitor

Standards Committee

Date: 6th July 2011

Subject: Members' Induction Period 2011

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Committee of the following issues:
 - New Members' declaration of acceptance of office and undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct;
 - Information on the Members' register of interests; and
 - Training of Members.
2. It is part of the Standards Committee's responsibilities to review and make arrangements for training in matters relating to the Code of Conduct and local codes and protocols. This report therefore provides information about the Members' induction period for 2011.
3. Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Committee of the following issues:

- New Members' declaration of acceptance of office and undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct;
- Information on the Members' register of interests; and
- Training of Members.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 It is part of the Standards Committee's responsibilities to review and make arrangements for training in matters relating to the Code of Conduct and local codes and protocols. This report therefore provides information about the Members' induction period for 2011.

2.2 On 6th May 2011, 24 Councillors were re-elected and 9 new Councillors were elected to Leeds City Council. All 33 Members completed two pieces of paperwork following the election. These were:

- Their declaration of acceptance of office and undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct; and
- Their register of interests entry.

2.3 During the induction period the new Members were invited to attend a series of training sessions on a variety of issues such as: the role of scrutiny; speaking in meetings; the role of area committees; managing case work; and how to Chair meetings.

2.4 In addition, every Parish and Town Council within Leeds held elections or co-opted new Members on 6th May 2011.

3.0 Main Issues

Declaration of acceptance of office

3.1 In Leeds, all 33 Members completed the following pieces of paperwork after their election or re-election:

- Their declaration of acceptance of office and undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct; and
- Their register of interests entry.

3.2 New Members were provided with all forms within their induction pack, which included guidance to where documents should be handed in and the relevant deadlines for completion.

3.3 The completed declarations of acceptance of office and compliance with the Code of Conduct are retained by Democratic Services and stored in a book. Members were asked to return their form by 26th May 2011 (prior to taking part in the annual meeting), and all Members were able to do this.

Register of Interests

- 3.4 The completed register of interests forms are retained by Governance Services. As is detailed in the Code of Conduct, Members were required to complete and return this form within 28 days of their election or re-election. Two register of interests forms were received after the 28 days, and all of the newly elected Members complied with the deadline. However the two registers which missed the 28 day deadline have subsequently now been received.

Training for Members

- 3.5 All newly elected and existing Members were invited to take part in a series of training courses during the induction period. This programme was advertised both prior to the election as well as by individual invite to the new Members, once they were known.
- 3.6 Six of the newly elected Members have attended training on the Code of Conduct, including registration and declaration of interests. Arrangements are currently being made to train the remaining three Members on the Code of Conduct. When the induction training has been completed, feedback will be sought as to whether any Members had difficulty in attending sessions and the reasons why, and these will be addressed as far as possible in preparation for next year's programme.

Parish and Town Councils

- 3.7 Every Parish and Town Council in Leeds also held elections or co-opted new Members on 6th May 2011. Officers within Governance Services have provided advice and guidance to Parish and Town Clerks regarding the forms that need to be completed by these new Members, and have sought assurance that all the relevant deadlines have been complied with. The Monitoring Officer also performs ethical framework functions in relation to Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area.
- 3.8 To date 29 out of 31 Councils have responded to confirm that the relevant paperwork has been completed. Those Councils have confirmed that overall four register entries were completed outside of the 28 day deadline, and six acceptance of office forms were not signed before or at the first meeting of the Council.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 Ensuring that all Members are aware of their responsibilities as Councillors, such as complying with the Code of Conduct, is essential for good governance. By providing training and assistance to Members, officers within Democratic Services help to ensure that all Councillors comply with their legal duties.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal or resource implications to noting this report.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 It is part of the Standards Committee's responsibilities to make arrangements for training in matters relating to codes of conduct and protocols. This report makes Members of the Committee aware of several issues relating to the Members' induction period.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

8.0 Background Papers

8.1 None.