

REPORT OF THE CLERK

UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

1 Purpose of Report

This report updates the Committee on further Code of Conduct 'refresher' training, which has recently taken place. The report also seeks views from the Committee in respect of training for the next municipal year.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Ask the Monitoring Officer to prepare a schedule for Code of Conduct training for Members for the next municipal year and obtain details of external training providers.

3 Background

A Code of Conduct training seminar for Members of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin, the Parish/Town Councils in the Borough, and Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority took place on 5 December 2005. This concludes the Member training for this municipal year and it is recommended that a similar programme is prepared for next year.

A training programme for the Members outlined above took place in May and June of 2005. Training was provided by Peter Keith-Lucas, a partner in the law firm Bevan Brittan. Members received a report in respect of the outcome of that training at the July 2005 meeting of this Committee.

Unfortunately, even though there were three training sessions, to which all Members were invited, some were unable to attend. Accordingly, it was considered appropriate to provide one final seminar to give the opportunity to all Members to obtain some form of 'refresher' training'.



Accordingly, a training seminar took place at the Civic Offices, Telford on the evening of 5 December 2005. The training was presented by the Monitoring Officer and the Group Solicitor, Standards and Regulatory, from Borough of Telford & Wrekin. The training lasted approximately two hours and provided a general overview of the Code of Conduct, concentrating on particular elements, such as personal and prejudicial interests. Of the twenty people who attended, three were Members and two were officers of this authority.

Feedback forms were completed by seventeen of the twenty and the analysis is set out below. In addition, there were some comments about the poor acoustics of the venue (including noise coming from the corridor) but there were also positive comments from those who had found the training useful.

	Poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Presentation content	0	1	5	5	6
Presentation delivery	0	2	5	5	5
How useful was the training?	0	1	6	5	5
Venue	1	1	6	6	3

Nine Members of the Fire Authority and both Independent Members of its Standards Committee have now attended at least one of the training sessions organised by the Borough of Telford & Wrekin in the Code of Conduct this municipal year. Some Members have attended more than one session. The eight Members, who have not attended any of these sessions, are all Members of Shropshire County Council, which organises its own Code of Conduct training. Furthermore, some have received training from the Borough or District Councils, of which they are also Members. The majority have, therefore, received some form of training.

Code of Conduct training for Members is not compulsory. It is, however, recommended that all Members have some form of 'refresher', training every year. This is particularly important, as there may be changes to the Code in future. It is, therefore, recommended that a further course of training is provided for the next municipal year and that more than one training session is again arranged in order to ensure that as many Members as possible are able to attend. It may be appropriate to employ an external trainer for these seminars and, if the Committee is in agreement with this view, officers will obtain details of appropriate providers.

Any timetable proposed for training in the next municipal year may be subject to change, depending on whether or not an announcement is made in respect of potential changes to the Code of Conduct. Whilst it may be that any changes cannot be made for a significant period of time (because they will require legislative change), some form of training will still be required.



4 Legal Comment

Code of Conduct training for Members is not compulsory. It is, however, recommended that all Members undertake some form of Code of Conduct 'refresher' training on a regular basis.

5 Financial Implications

The cost of the proposed Code of Conduct training is not yet known. The Fire Authority does, however, have a dedicated budget for Member training and it is likely that any costs can be contained within this budget.

6 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no equality or diversity Implications arising directly from this report.

7 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

8 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

Standards Committee 13 July 2005 Report 6 – Outcome of Training in the Code of Conduct

For further information about this report please contact Susan Kembrey, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, on 01952 202461.

