

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCILS' FORUM

6TH JANUARY 2009

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PARISH COUNCILS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Monitoring Officer
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

To seek the views of the Parish Councils' Forum on the establishment of a training programme for the parish councils on ethical governance issues, together with the best method of delivery and priorities of such a training programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That, based on feedback received from the parish councils, officers draw up a training programme for the parish councils on ethical governance issues, for consideration at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of its statutory role the Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards by Members (which includes both parish and district councillors) and co-opted Members of the authority. The Committee also assists Members and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 In carrying out these functions the Standards Committee ensures that Members are appropriately trained on the Members' Code of Conduct and associated ethical governance issues.
- 3.3 In addition to inviting parish council representatives to relevant training sessions at the Council House, some of which have been conducted as part of the Council's ongoing Member Development Programme, the district council's Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer have, when requested, held workshop sessions at parish councils on the Code of Conduct and declaring interests.

- 3.4 In order to build upon the training which has taken place to date, the Standards Committee is to consider developing a training programme for parish councils on ethical governance issues.
- 3.5 The views of both the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils ("CALC") and the Parish Councils' Forum are therefore being sought as to the establishment of such a training programme, together with the content of any training and how this should be delivered.
- 3.6 At its meeting on 3rd December 2008 the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire CALC considered this matter and there was general enthusiasm for the development of a training programme. It was felt that it would be better for training to take place in the parishes, in clusters of three or so parish councils, and that a programme of visits should be established in order that those parish councillors who might miss local sessions could attend another session. The items which were deemed to be of particular interest were: personal and prejudicial interests - including the register of interests; dual-hatted Members; and pre-determination and bias.
- 3.7 A report detailing the views of both the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire CALC and the Parish Councils' Forum will be referred to the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 5th February 2009.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As it is anticipated that any training for the parish councils will be conducted by either the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer there are no financial implications associated with this report, other than officer time spent in preparing for and delivering any training.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Sections 53-56 of Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 set out the requirements for standards committees. Section 50 of the said Act also introduced primary legislation to enable the implementation of a Members' Code of Conduct.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

This report is linked to Council objective 2 - Improvement.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The main risk associated with the details included in this report is:

- *the risk of complaints about elected Members.*

7.2 This risk is being managed as follows:

Risk Register: *Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services*

Key Objective Ref No: 3

Key Objective: *Effective ethical governance*

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues - None
Personnel Implications - None
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - None
Policy - None
Environmental - None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes

Head of Financial Services	No
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Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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