

# Item 6

## REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8TH FEBRUARY 2007

## REPORT OF SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER

### MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: STANDARDS: ATTENDANCE REVIEW 2006

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is a review of Member attendance at standards training events during 2006.
- 1.2 In the view of moving towards mandatory requirements and best practice it has been recommended that with effect from the beginning of 2006 it shall be deemed a mandatory requirement for all Members to attend at least one qualifying training event per year. Attendance will be reported to the first Standards Committee of each year; henceforward details of Member attendance/non attendance will be publicly available.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee considers the Report and notes the mandatory requirements for all Members.

#### 3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The qualifying training events that satisfy the mandatory training requirement include the following:
  - Training events conducted or organised by the Council's Monitoring Officer.
  - Conferences, training and events involving wholly or mainly standards and ethical issues organised as part of the Council's member development programmes or by local government organisations and similar bodies, full details of which have previously been notified to the Council's Monitoring Officer. Examples would include the Standards Board for England, CIPFA, the LGA and NEREO.
- 3.2 Several standards training events have been conducted throughout 2006 providing Members with many opportunities to receive training on standards issues. The first training event was organised and held on 4<sup>th</sup> April at Ferryhill Leisure Centre and the facilitator was Peter Keith Lucas of Bevan, Brittan Solicitors. The event provided the opportunity

to take part in a local standards mock event to discuss problem areas of the Code, complaints and investigations.

- 3.3 Delegates attended the training event from a wide range of regional authorities. Six Borough Members attended.
- 3.4 Every year the Standards Board for England holds an Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in Birmingham. The 2006 Assembly focused on several different areas including the new ethical agenda, local ownership, the Code of Conduct, investigations and hearings. The Assembly addressed these themes and concentrated on identifying and then closing the gaps between resources, knowledge and experience needed for effective regulation of ethical standards at a local level. There were limited places available for this event, hence, only two Members attended from this authority, Councillor Andrew Gray and Councillor Andrew Smith.
- 3.5 The final training events were held in the autumn of 2006 and presented by the Council's Monitoring Officer on three occasions, one in the Council Chamber and the other two at Town Councils, Great Aycliffe Town Council and Sedgefield Town Council. Members had the option of which training session they preferred to attend.
- 3.6 39 Members attended one of the Autumn training events.
- 3.7 11 Councillors did not attend any of the organised standards training events throughout 2006.
- 3.8 ***Parish and Town Councils:*** It has been proposed that Parish and Town Clerks adopt similar training arrangements for their Members and maintain records of attendances at qualifying training events. It is suggested that attendance/non-attendance be reported annually at their Council Meetings.
- 3.9 Parish and Town Councils so far who have adopted similar arrangements are Shildon Town Council, Sedgefield Town Council and Great Aycliffe Town Council.

#### **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 No specific financial implications have been identified.

#### **5. CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council's Management Team has considered this Report on 22nd January 2007.

#### **6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 All material considerations have been taken into account in the contents of this Report. In particular, risks may arise unless Members of Council are fully apprised on standards matters.

## 7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None apply.

## 8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 None apply.

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**Wards:** N/A

**Key Decision Validation:** N/A

### Background Papers

Attendance list from all organised training events.

### Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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