

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1 September 2008

Standards Training Plan

0.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update Members on standards training issues.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 19 March 2007, the Committee agreed a Training Plan for Members on ethical issues, which has been amended over time as necessary.

2.2 A revised Training Plan is attached at Appendix 1, for Members' information and comments.

3.0 TRAINING ISSUES

Training to Standards Committee

3.1 A largely practical training session is planned for the Committee on Tuesday **30 September 2008 at 10am in Meeting Room 2**, which will focus on the local complaints regime.

3.2 The Committee now has three newly appointed Councillors: those Members are requested to consider whether they feel in need of any additional general standards training in view of their role on the Standards Committee. If so, an additional training session could be scheduled for the Committee, which would act as a refresher session for the longer standing Members of the Committee, or a smaller or individual session(s) with the Monitoring Officer could be arranged for the new Members on the Committee.

3.3 The Council has also agreed that an additional independent Member be recruited to the Standards Committee. The Standards Board Guidance on the Role and Make Up of Standards Committees contains recommendations as to induction training for new independent Members. It is suggested that training needs for the new independent Member can be best addressed once the timing of their appointment is determined and they have joined the Committee.

Training to Council Members

Recent Training

3.4 Full training on the new Code of Conduct for Members was given as part of the Members' Seminar on 10 May 2007. The standards' session was attended by 18 Members.

3.5 The remaining 54 Members were invited, by letter, to attend one of the two further training sessions held on 7 and 19 March 2008. It was acknowledged in the letter that Members may have also received standards training from other authorities upon which they serve. A short survey form on standards training received was therefore included, to allow any gaps in training identified to be addressed. Members of neighbouring district/borough councils were also invited to the sessions.

3.6 25 responses were received to the invitation letter. Of those 25 responses:

- a) 18 Members accepted one of the training dates;
- b) 3 Members confirmed they were unavailable to attend either date;
- c) 4 Members confirmed they had received standards training elsewhere and therefore did not intend to attend;
- d) 9 responded specifically on the survey of standards training. Of those 9 responses:
 - 5 Members had received training elsewhere;
 - 1 Member was due to receive some training through another authority;
 - 3 Members felt they did require some standards training. Two of these Members attended the training session on 19 March and the other was due to attend the session on 7 March but was later unable to do so.

3.1 Ultimately, ten Members attended the training on 19 March: this included two Members from a neighbouring authority and two independent Members from the Standards Committee. Similar numbers attended the first session on 7 March.

Future Training

3.2 Refresher standards training for Members will be planned for early 2009. It is hoped to arrange the training for a day when Members are already present in County Hall as this should maximise attendance. Group Leaders will also be asked to confirm that they will support officers in encouraging attendance at the training.

3.3 The training will include:

- a short introduction;
- a brief powerpoint presentation highlighting the key parts of the Code of Conduct and the new locally based complaints regime;
- practical case studies.

3.4 Once a date is fixed, contact will be made with the Heads of Legal Services in neighbouring authorities to invite Members of those authorities to the training. Should there be too many Members wishing to attend, then a repeat training session can be organised.

Training to Officers

3.5 Regarding the ethics training to Officers, it is planned to undertake four separate comprehensive training sessions for key individuals in each Directorate who will then cascade the training, at an appropriate level, throughout their respective Directorates. It is currently planned to undertake these sessions by the end of October 2008. The training will cover both the Officers' and Members' Codes of Conduct, the Member/Officer Protocol and the principles of good decision-making.

3.6 Members will be kept informed of progress.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note the contents of this report.
- 3.2 That the newly appointed Members of the Committee consider whether they would wish to receive any additional standards training.

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Background Documents:
None

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