

Agenda

Standards Committee

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Tuesday 16 November 2021**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **The Old Library - Oxford Town Hall**

For further information please contact:

Catherine Phythian, Committee and Member Services Officer, Committee Services Officer

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- may register in advance to speak to the committee in accordance with the [committee's rules](#)
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Committee Membership

Councillors: Membership 7: Quorum 3: substitutes are permitted.

Councillor Susanna Pressel (Chair)

Councillor Mark Lygo (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Councillor Rae Humberstone

Councillor Edward Mundy

Councillor Marie Tidball

Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton

Chris Ballinger	Independent Person non-voting
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Jill McCleery	Independent Person non-voting
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Andrew Mills-Hicks	Independent Person non-voting
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Osama Raja	Independent Person non-voting
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Apologies and notification of substitutes received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting. Substitutes for the Chair and Vice-chair do not take on these roles.

Agenda

	Pages
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Declarations of Interest	
3 Appointment of a Parish Council representative as a non-voting member of the Standards Committee	1 - 2
Purpose of the report	
This report details the proposal for Parish Council representation on the Standards Committee following the retirement of the previous representative.	
Recommendation:	
That the Standards Committee recommends that Full Council appoints Councillor Peter Nowland of Blackbird Leys Parish Council as the co-opted, non-voting member of the Standards Committee representing the four Parish Councils in Oxford until May 2022.	
4 Code of Conduct: summary of complaints and individual dispensations - 15 June - 31 October 2021	3 - 8
Purpose of report:	
To advise the Committee of:	
1. the number of complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct which have been, or are to be, considered by the Head of Law and Governance (in her statutory capacity as the authority's Monitoring Officer) and the Independent Persons. The report also notes the outcome, where complaints have been concluded; and	
2. the number of dispensations to an individual member, granted under Section 33 of the 2011 Localism Act, by the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with an Independent Person.	
Recommendation:	
That the Standards Committee notes the content of the report.	
5 Member training 2022	9 - 22
Purpose of the report	
To update the Standards Committee on the delivery of Member training in 2021 and the arrangements for member training in 2022.	

Recommendation

That the Standards Committee resolves to:

1. Note the review of member training and development in 2021
2. Endorse the proposals for member training in 2022 including:
 - a) the requirement that Code of Conduct and Planning training will be compulsory for all members following the local elections in May 2022 (instead of in 2023 which is a non-election year); and
 - b) the continued delivery of most member training and briefing sessions remotely over Zoom in 2022.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting - 22 June 2021

23 - 24

7 Dates of future meetings

The Committee is scheduled to meet at 6.00pm on:

- 23 March 2022

Information for those attending

Recording and reporting on meetings held in public

Members of public and press can record, or report in other ways, the parts of the meeting open to the public. You are not required to indicate in advance but it helps if you notify the Committee Services Officer prior to the meeting so that they can inform the Chair and direct you to the best place to record.

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- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

Please be aware that you may be recorded during your speech and any follow-up. If you are attending please be aware that recording may take place and that you may be inadvertently included in these.

The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". The matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

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To: Standards Committee
Date: 16 November 2021
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Parish Council representation on the Standards Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	This report details the proposal for Parish Council representation on the Standards Committee following the retirement of the previous representative.
Key decision:	No
Recommendation:	That the Standards Committee recommends that Full Council appoints Councillor Peter Nowland of Blackbird Leys Parish Council as the co-opted, non-voting member of the Standards Committee representing the four Parish Councils in Oxford until May 2022.

Introduction and background

1. The Council may appoint members of committees who are not members of the local authority. Such persons may be appointed because they can offer specialist knowledge, expertise or enthusiasm in the work of the committee or because they represent sections of the local community that are relevant to the work of the committee.
2. The Members' Code of Conduct is shared by all local authorities within Oxfordshire and applies equally to parish councillors as to city (and county) councillors.

Parish Council representation on the Standards Committee

3. The Oxford City Council Standards Committee membership provides for one co-opted (non-voting member) to represent the four parish councils in Oxford.
4. That position is now vacant following the retirement of ex-Littlemore Parish Councillor, Dorian Hancock.
5. The Parish Councils may agree jointly on a single nominee or they may submit individual nominations from each Parish Council.

6. There are no rules concerning the qualifications but common sense suggests that:
 - the appointment would be for the duration of the representative’s term of office on the Parish Council; this is to provide a degree of consistency and continuity
 - the appointment should not be for a dual-hatted City and Parish Councillor
7. Only one Parish Council submitted a nomination, which was endorsed by all councils at the Parish Council Forum on 27 July 2021:
 - Cllr Peter Nowland from Blackbird Leys
8. Councillor Nowland’s current term of office at Blackbird Leys Parish Council ends in May 2022. Councillor Nowland has been a member of the Parish Council since 2016.

Legal implications

9. The Council has the power under Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appoint persons other than members of the authority to committees. The composition of the Standards Committee is set out in Part 14.3 of the Constitution and provides for a non-voting co-opted member to represent the parish councils in Oxford.

Financial implications

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Co-opted members of committees are not entitled to be paid allowances under the Councillors’ Allowances Scheme (Part 26 of the Constitution).

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To: Standards Committee
Date: 16 November 2021
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Code of Conduct: summary of complaints and individual dispensations (15 June – 31 October 2021)

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To advise the Committee of: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The number and status of complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct which have been considered by the Head of Law and Governance (in her statutory capacity as the authority's Monitoring Officer) in consultation with an Independent Person, from 15 June to 31 October 2021.2. The number of dispensations to an individual member, granted under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, by the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with an Independent Person.
Recommendation:	That the Standards Committee notes the content of the report.
Appendix 1: List of individual complaints and Monitoring Officer decisions	

Introduction and background

- 1. In compliance with legislation relating to the standards and conduct of elected councillors, the Council has in place complaints handling arrangements to enable an individual to make a formal complaint that an elected or co-opted member of the City Council, or of a Parish Council within the City Council's area, has failed to comply with the authority's Members' Code of Conduct.**
- 2. The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting high standards of ethical behaviour by monitoring and making recommendations to Council on complaints handling arrangements. This report from the Monitoring Officer which identifies any issues or learning points arising from the complaints received contributes to that monitoring process.**

3. The key stages of the complaints handling arrangements can be summarised as:

<p>Initial tests</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer will apply the following “initial tests” to the complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a complaint against one or more named councillors of Oxford City Council or a Parish Council within the city boundaries; • The named councillor was in office at the time of the alleged conduct and the Code of Conduct was in force at the time; • The complaint, if proven, could be a breach of the Code under which the councillor was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct.
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>The complaint will be assessed and a decision made by the Council’s Monitoring Officer in consultation with an Independent Person as to the next steps. At this stage the options open to the Monitoring Officer are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action • Informal resolution brokered by the Monitoring Officer and/or Group Leader • Referred for investigation • Referred to the police or other regulatory agency
<p>Investigation</p>	<p>A formal investigation may be conducted by an officer from Oxford City Council, an officer from another local authority or an independent investigator.</p> <p>The investigating officer will review the complaint and supporting evidence and may interview some or all of the people concerned.</p> <p>The investigating officer will then produce a draft report. The complainant and the subject councillor concerned will normally have an opportunity to comment on the draft report. The investigating officer will then submit the report to the Monitoring Officer.</p>
<p>Local Hearing</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer will consider the findings of the investigation and, in consultation with the Independent Person(s), determine what action to take. At this stage the options open to the Monitoring Officer are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Hearing – complaint to be determined by the Standards Committee; • Local Resolution - a fair resolution of the complaint which is acceptable to all parties brokered by the Monitoring Officer; or • No action - complaint dismissed

Complaints made against members of Oxford City Council or a Parish Council

4. In the period 15 June 2021 up to and including 31 October 2021 the Monitoring Officer closed one outstanding complaint and considered three new complaints relating to four city councillors. One complaint was received in respect of a Parish Councillor. That complaint is still active and has been referred for formal investigation. A list of the individual complaints and the outcome, where determined, is attached at Appendix 1.
5. In all cases the Monitoring Officer consulted with an Independent Person before reaching a decision on the Assessment process. In all cases the Complainant and Subject Councillors were notified of the decision and the Monitoring Officer's Decision Notice was placed on the case file.

Learning points

6. The Monitoring Officer will brief the Committee at the meeting on any relevant learning points identified at the Assessment stage.
7. **Complaint #17257** related to alleged posts on social media. The Subject Councillor neither confirmed nor denied posting the images or attaching the offensive hashtag but asserted that they were acting in a private capacity. The Monitoring Officer was satisfied that the Subject Councillor was not acting as a representative of the Council, engaged on Council business nor acting 'as the voice' of the Council at the time of the alleged offences. The Monitoring Officer concluded that the Subject Councillor should be offered advice about their conduct in a private capacity and how it can impact on the reputation of the Council when they are known to be a Councillor.
8. **Complaint #17324** concerned the alleged failure of the Subject Councillor to respond to communications from a constituent; the timing of which may have coincided with a known service disruption to the delivery/receipt of councillor emails. The Monitoring Officer was satisfied that the Subject Councillor was in office at the time of the alleged conduct and that the Code of Conduct was in force at that time. However, the Monitoring Officer considered that the conduct complained of was not sufficiently serious for any action to be taken other than informal resolution of this matter. There is no learning point as such other than to encourage councillors to be mindful of any unexpected changes in the volume and frequency of email traffic.

Dispensations granted to an individual Member

9. The Localism Act 2011 prevents Members from participating in any business of the Council where they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) unless they have sought a dispensation under Section 33 of the Act. Applications must be made in writing and dispensations may be sought for a period of up to four years.
10. On 1 October 2018 Council granted a general dispensation, to remain in force for a period of 4 years (ending on 30 September 2022), to all Oxford City Council Members and co-opted Members, to speak and vote where they would otherwise have a DPI in the following matters:

- **Determining an allowance** (including special responsibility allowances), travelling expense, payment or indemnity given to Members
- **Housing:** where the Member (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the particular tenancy or lease of the Member (their spouse or partner);
- **Housing Benefit/Universal Credit:** where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) receives housing benefit;
- Any **Ceremonial Honours** given to Members;
- Setting the **Council Tax** or a precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (or any subsequent legislation); and
- Setting a **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme** or Local scheme for the payment of business rates (including eligibility for rebates and reductions) for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (or any subsequent legislation)

11. In October 2018 Council also delegated the granting of dispensations to an individual member under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with an Independent Person.
12. In the period covered by this report there have been no requests for an individual dispensation under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

Sensitive Interests

13. Section 32 Localism Act 2011 provides that where a member of a local authority has an interest which they, and the Monitoring Officer, consider could lead to the member or a person connected to them, to be subjected to violence or intimidation if it were disclosed, it can be deemed by the Monitoring Officer to be a sensitive interest.
14. The effect of a sensitive interest is that the interest and details of it are disclosed to the Local Authority but only the existence of the interest is included in the public version of the register of member interests, with the details being withheld.
15. Government guidance to Monitoring Officers has provided that the threshold to be applied to determining violence and intimidation is low.
16. The Monitoring Officer can confirm that she has deemed the interest in land in Oxford to be a sensitive interest for several Members since they became Councillors, or were re-elected, in May 2021.

Legal implications

17. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to have a Code of Conduct which sets out the standards expected of Members whenever they act in their official capacity. The Code must also have in place a suitable procedure at a local level to investigate and determine allegations against elected Members and co-opted Members and arrangements to deal with requests for dispensations. The Council is also responsible for having arrangements in place to investigate and determine allegations against Parish Councillors.

Financial implications

18. There is a cost to the authority when a complaint is referred for external investigation this is determined by market factors in terms of the availability of investigators identified through complaint procurement processes.

Risk management

19. If the Council fails to adopt and maintain a Code of Conduct and process for the investigation of complaints which is fit for purpose, robust and transparent then there are risks to the Council's reputation and also to the integrity of its corporate governance and decision-making processes as it will not be compliant with legislation. Formal consideration of requests for dispensation minimises the risk of the Council not following lawful procedures in respect of members' interests.

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Appendix 1: List of individual complaints and Monitoring Officer decisions (June – August 2021)

	Ref	Date	City/Parish	Code – alleged breach in behaviour	MO decision
1.	16985	Apr 2021	Oxford City	All: 3 - 19 inclusive	Complaint dismissed; July - Complainant failed to provide evidence or case number for Police complaint.
2.	17257	July 2021	Oxford City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty & Integrity • Respect for Others • Bullying • Confidential Information 	No further action; not official capacity. MO gave informal advice to Subject Councillor
3.	17324	Aug 2021	Oxford City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Openness • Honesty & Integrity • Knowledge • Professional Advice 	Official capacity; further action not in the public interest as the subject matter was not sufficiently serious. MO instructed Subject Councillor to respond to Complainant's emails
4.	17352	Aug 2021	Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for others • Bullying 	Official capacity. Referred for formal investigation

To: Standards Committee
Date: 16 November 2021
Report of: Head of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Title of Report: Member training update

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To update the Standards Committee on the delivery of Member training in 2021 and the arrangements for member training in 2022.
Recommendation: That the Standards Committee resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the review of member training and development in 2021 2. Endorse the proposals for member training in 2022 including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the requirement that Code of Conduct and Planning training will be compulsory for all members following the local elections in May 2022 (instead of in 2023 which is a non-election year); and b) the continued delivery of most member training and briefing sessions remotely over Zoom in 2022. 	

Appendices	
1	Member training and development scheme 2020-24

Background

1. The Standards Committee has responsibility in the Council's Constitution for receiving reports from, and advising the Monitoring Officer on, training for members.

Member training and development scheme 2020-24

2. At its meeting on 2 March 2020 the Standards Committee endorsed a Member Training and Development Scheme for 2020-24. That Training Scheme was subsequently approved by the Monitoring Officer and is attached as Appendix 1.
3. The Training Scheme builds on the rules relating to compulsory member training set out in the Councillors' Allowances Scheme which forms Part 26 of the Council's

Constitution. The Allowances Scheme requires that members who fail to attend the following training will have a reduction applied to their basic allowances:

- i. Induction for newly elected members (new members only)
 - ii. Compulsory planning training
 - iii. Compulsory code of conduct training
 - iv. Compulsory licensing training (members of licensing committees only)
4. The Training Scheme articulates an expanded induction programme for newly elected members which includes training on safeguarding awareness, finance, and inclusive behaviours. It also sets out an indicative offer of wider skills-based training and development opportunities for members beyond the compulsory training that all members are required to attend.
 5. The Training Scheme reduced the frequency of compulsory Code of Conduct training from annually, as it was previously, to every other year for all members. Compulsory Planning training is also due take place every two years, with the intention being that these training requirements will apply in election years only.
 6. In view of the Covid 19 pandemic and the postponement of the local elections originally scheduled for May 2020, it was agreed that 2020 would be treated as a non-election year under the Training Scheme. As such no compulsory training was held on the Code of Conduct and Planning in that year.

Review of Member training and development in 2021

7. The compulsory induction and training programme originally planned for 2020 was delivered following the local elections held in May 2021.
8. All members have attended compulsory training on the Code of Conduct and Planning. Similarly all members of licensing committees have attended the compulsory licensing training. All newly elected members completed the expanded induction programme which included training on safeguarding awareness, finance and inclusive behaviours. Unlike in previous years all training was delivered remotely over Zoom due to the pandemic.
9. Feedback was sought from newly elected members elected in May 2021 on the induction programme and the wider support they received (welcome packs, buddying, etc.). The feedback received is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Feedback on support for newly elected members

New member feedback	Officer response
i. The training to be useful and informative.	Noted.
ii. Casework / responding to residents was only covered in the context of GDPR.	Issues around the use of personal data are crucial for members. The Council does not offer more general training on handling casework as this is not something that could be resourced internally. This may be something for political groups to consider.

iii. Delivery over Zoom worked well.	Officers propose that training will predominantly be delivered over Zoom in 2022.
iv. The option of lunchtime and evening sessions was helpful.	A choice of timings will always be offered where attendance is compulsory.
v. The information sheets and documents were incredibly useful during the first few months.	Noted.
vi. It was really important to have a buddy to contact and who would touch base regularly.	Noted.
vii. The workload as a new councillors was very high for the first 4-6 weeks with casework, messages from stakeholders and lots of meetings and training to factor in. As such there was little time to reflect or put training into practice.	Compulsory training on the Code of Conduct is considered to be time critical for new members in the post-election period. Training on Planning is also time-critical for new members, particularly those who will sit on planning committees soon after their election. Officers will review whether other training can be spread out to reduce the demands on new members during their initial weeks in office.

10. Table 2 sets out the additional (non-compulsory) training sessions and briefings that have been scheduled to date in 2021, together with attendance figures where these have already taken place. Where fewer than six members register for a session officers will consider whether it should go ahead but attendance has generally been quite high and no sessions have been cancelled due to low take up.

Table 2: Additional training and briefings offered in 2021 to date

Topic	Date	# of attendees (# signed up)
Covered Market	19 March 2021	8
Economic Strategy	23 March 2021	10
Debt recovery under a Breathing Space agreement	14 June 2021	10
Oxford's West End development	21 June 2021	18
Audit and Governance Committee workshop	29 June 2021	7
Housing and Growth Deal	1 July 2021	18
Environmental Sustainability	7 July 2021	13
Housing and Homelessness Strategy	20 July 2021	8

refresh		
Introduction to Oxford Direct Services	22 September 2021	16
Social media training	23 September 2021 & 19 October 2021	11
Companies and Joint Ventures	27 September 2021	6
Air quality	7 October 2021	12
Procurement and Fraud Awareness	18 October 2021	5
Conflict Management and Personal Safety (e-learning course)	Offered on 22 October 2021	0
Chairing skills	8 November 2021	(14)
Chief Constable's annual address	15 November 2021	(18)
National Planning Policy Framework and the Oxford Local Plan 2036	17 November 2021	(3)

Member training and development in 2022

11. Any new members elected in May 2022 will be required to complete the same expanded induction programme that was delivered to new members elected in May 2021. However, officers will review the phasing of the training with a view to reducing the time commitments for new members during their first weeks in office.
12. While compulsory training on the Code of Conduct and Planning was delivered in 2021 and is due to be held every other year, it would be simpler and reduce duplication to keep the timing of compulsory training in step with the electoral cycle, so it is proposed that Code of Conduct and Planning training will be compulsory for all members in 2022 instead of in 2023 (which is a non-election year). This would also help to bolster the learning and development of those members elected for the first time in 2021.
13. It is also intended that a range of additional training and briefing sessions will be offered to members, including, for example, training on specific planning issues. Personal safety training will again be offered to members prior to the local elections scheduled for May 2022, although to date there has been no take up. Cabinet development days are also planned for 2022.
14. Officers will also look at ways to improve the level and quality of information provided to members about the work and priorities of different Council services, to make it easier for newly elected members to understand how the organisation is structured and what work is already underway.
15. To inform the programme of member briefings for 2022/23, feedback was requested from all members in October 2021 about member briefings, including possible topics, the format of briefings and preferred start times. All members who responded requested that briefings continue to be held remotely over Zoom. The clear majority expressed a preference for evening sessions starting at 6.00pm although there was also some appetite for the alternative of lunchtime sessions starting at 12pm. Unlike compulsory training, briefings are offered on a one-off

basis because attendance is optional and there is not the capacity to resource repeat sessions. However, with remote delivery it will be possible to make private recordings of the sessions available to any members who are unable to attend.

16. A number of suggestions have been received for briefing topics in 2022/23 and these are listed below. Senior officers may also suggest briefing topics. Feedback was received from members that holding fewer, high quality briefings would be preferable to holding lots of briefings that are of less interest. In formulating a programme of member briefings for 2022, officers will consider which of the suggested topics are best addressed through member briefings and which could be addressed in other ways:

- Housing needs
- Community Services
- Benefits and Welfare
- Council communications
- Food poverty (particularly child food poverty)
- Littering and street cleaning services
- Noise nuisance from licensed premises
- Oxford West End Development Ltd.
- Anti-social behaviour
- Zero Emissions Zone
- Traffic, transport and parking
- Street maintenance
- Rent repayment orders (whereby private sector tenants can reclaim their rent if landlords have committed certain offences)

Legal issues

13. There is no legal requirement for the Council to adopt a scheme for member training but doing so is considered good corporate governance and member support practice.

14. Council has collectively agreed that members who fail to attend the applicable compulsory induction and training (detailed in paragraph 3) will forego a portion of their allowances, as set out in Part 26.2 of the Council's Constitution.

Financial issues

15. Ordinarily the majority of member training is delivered by officers of the Council in the Town Hall. Services are responsible for service-based training (e.g. planning, licensing), and may use external trainers where service budgets allow.

16. There is a small budget for member training held by Committee and Member Services which has been used to pay for one or two external trainers per year as required to meet members' training and development needs in particular areas that the Council cannot deliver (e.g. charring skills, inclusive behaviours). This budget is also used to fund individual members' attendance at external training courses that are relevant to their special responsibilities or the reasonable learning and development of a councillor, with the agreement of their Group Leader.

17. Any move away from the provision of in-house training or an increase in the number of specialist external training courses would result in an additional financial cost to the Council which has not been budgeted for.

Risk

18. There is a risk that if members undertaking regulatory functions are not equipped to undertake those roles then the Council's decision making could be undermined and subject to an increased risk of challenge, which, if successful, could be very costly for the Council. Similarly if members are not trained on the Code of Conduct there is a risk of an increase in the number of complaints that members have breached the Code of Conduct.

Equalities

19. All newly elected councillors are invited to declare any special requirements relating to the provision of training and Committee and Member Services will work with the individual to ensure that those needs are met.

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Member training and development scheme 2020-24

Purpose

1. To ensure that all elected members are equipped with the basic skills, knowledge and resources they need to perform their duties and responsibilities as a councillor during their term of office.

Principles

2. Member training and development will be based on the following principles:
 - i. An induction for new members and essential training for all members will be treated as compulsory, as set out in the Councillors' Allowances Scheme.
 - ii. Additional training and development opportunities will be offered to equip members for their particular duties and responsibilities.
 - iii. Induction and training will be offered on a range of dates and times, including evening as well as daytime sessions.
 - iv. Presenters will strive to ensure that training is interactive, engaging and caters for a range of learning styles.
 - v. Feedback from members will inform the content and delivery of induction and training sessions.

Compulsory induction and training

3. Welcome sessions for new members will be held in the week after Oxford City Council elections and will be followed by a programme of induction training to equip new members with the skills and knowledge they need for their term of office as a councillor. This will include training on finance, safeguarding and values and behaviours as part of an expanded induction programme.
4. New members will be expected to complete all elements of the induction programme by the end of July in the year in which they are elected unless the Head of Law and Governance agrees that special circumstances apply.
5. Returning members will as a minimum arrange to sign their oath of office prior to the Annual Council meeting and may attend an initial induction session should they wish to do so. Returning members will also be encouraged to attend the induction training, particularly where they have not previously attended training on the topics covered.
6. Training on the Code of Conduct and planning will be compulsory for all members upon their (re)elections and subsequently on a biennial basis. Licensing training will be compulsory for members appointed to licensing committees on an annual basis. Members who have not attended the compulsory planning or licensing training will be

barred from sitting on planning committees and licensing sub-committees respectively until they have done so.

7. Compulsory training may be required more frequently where there are changes to policy, legislation or Government guidance and the Head of Law and Governance determines that training on such changes is necessary and cannot wait until the next scheduled training on that topic.
8. Members elected in by-elections held separately from City Council elections will be offered an initial induction session and compulsory training on an individual basis on the Code of Conduct, planning and, if appointed to a licensing committee, licensing. Induction training on finance, safeguarding and values and behaviours will not be offered on an individual basis but their attendance when this training is next held will be treated as compulsory.
9. The programme of compulsory induction and training over the course of a members' term of office is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Programme of compulsory induction and training by term of office

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Induction welcome	✓*	✗	✗
Induction training: Safeguarding	✓*	✗	✗
Induction training: Finance	✓*	✗	✗
Induction training: Values & behaviours	✓*	✗	✗
Code of Conduct	✓	✗	✓
Planning	✓	✗	✓
Licensing (members of licensing committees only)	✓	✓	✓

**Compulsory for new members only but all members will be encouraged to attend*

10. An overview of the timing and indicative content of the induction and training is set out in Table 2. In addition the Council will seek to respond to any new or emerging training needs that are identified (e.g. from member feedback) over the period of this scheme where resources allow.

Table 2: Indicative timing and content of compulsory induction and training

Compulsory session (delivered by)	Timings	Indicative content
Induction welcome (Chief Executive &	Before the Annual Council meeting for new members only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Oath of office (for all members) • Form completion

<p>Law and Governance. All directors and heads of service will be invited to meet new members)</p>	<p>Choice of one daytime and one evening session – 3 to 6 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo and issuing of ID/fob • Issuing of ICT equipment and training on its use • Code of Conduct training • Overview of the Council • Key issues for the Council • Video clips of member interviews and Council meetings
<p>Induction training: safeguarding awareness (Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications)</p>	<p>By end July -choice of various dates and times – 1.5 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What safeguarding means • Safeguarding duties • Governance (OSCB and OSAB) • Protocols and procedures • Figures for Oxfordshire • Categories of abuse (to include domestic violence and coercive control) • Risk factors • Reporting concerns
<p>Induction training: finance (Financial Services)</p>	<p>By end July - choice of various dates and times – 1.5 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Council's finances (General Fund, HRA and Capital) • Income and expenditure • Debt profile / borrowing • Investments • Rents • Budget setting • Capital process • Signing off the accounts • Risk management
<p>Induction training: values and behaviours (external trainer / Organisational Development)</p>	<p>By end July - choice of various dates and times – 1.5 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act • Unconscious bias • Lone working principles
<p>Code of Conduct (Law and Governance)</p>	<p>As part of the welcome and induction session for new members By end July for returning members - choice of various dates and times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven principles of public life • General obligations • Members' interests • Dispensations • Complaint handling arrangements • Standards Committee • Outside bodies • Media communications

	1.5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of information • Data Protection • Member-officer protocol
Planning (Planning Services and / or an external trainer)	Prior to the first committee meeting for members of planning committees By the end July for other members - choice of various dates and times 2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service overview • National Planning Policy Framework • Local Plan and planning policy • Growth Strategy • Community Infrastructure Levy • Development management • Planning committees • Planning applications • Material considerations • Decision making • Conditions • Planning Code of Practice • Bias and predetermination
Licensing (external trainer / Regulatory Services & Community Safety)	Two half-day sessions prior to the first case work sub- committee meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing functions • Licensing committees • Role of councillors • Licensing policy • Hearings • Decision making • Licensing objectives • Conditions • Fit and proper test

Additional training and development opportunities

11. Additional skills based training opportunities will be made available to members to support them in their specific roles as a councillor. This will include training delivered in house by officers or external trainers. The focus of additional training and development will be informed by feedback from members on their development needs and priorities. An indicative programme of additional training is set out in Table 3.
12. Subject to the allocation of budget and the agreement of their Group Leader, members may also access external training courses and events relevant to their special responsibilities or the reasonable learning and development of a councillor.

Table 3: Indicative programme of additional training

<i>Additional training (delivered by)</i>	<i>Indicative timings</i>	<i>Indicative content</i>
Safeguarding awareness	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What safeguarding means • Safeguarding duties

(Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications)	All Members will be strongly encouraged to attend by officers and through Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance (OSCB and OSAB) • Protocols and procedures • Figures for Oxfordshire • Categories of abuse (to include domestic violence and coercive control) • Risk factors • Reporting concerns
Thematic planning issues in depth (Planning Services)	At intervals avoiding post-election periods – 1.5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting reports and material considerations • Key urban design principles • Permitted development and enforcement • Planning viability assessments
Audit training (Financial Services)	Prior to or following the first meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee – 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Audit and Governance • Internal and external audit • Risk management • Annual Governance Statement • Statement of Accounts
Appointments training (external provider / Organisational Development)	Annually when new members are appointed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious bias
Scrutiny training (Law and Governance)	On a one to one basis prior to the second meeting of the Scrutiny Committee – 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Scrutiny is • Key values and aims • Powers • Operating principles • Work programming • Call in process • Role of Scrutiny members • Role of supporting officers
Social media training (Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications)	Following the delivery of compulsory training in election years – 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started on social media • Building engagement and two-way dialogue • The legalities of using social media • Social media protocol for councillors
Media skills training for new Cabinet Members	As requested following the appointment of new Cabinet Members – 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview skills including a mock interview • Guidance on media releases

(Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications / external trainer)	hour	
Chairing skills training for new committee chairs (External trainer / Law and Governance)	As requested following the appointment of new committee chairs – 2 to 3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and purpose • Time management and preparation • Protocols and the Constitution • Managing challenging contributions and controversial meetings
Lord Mayor / First Citizen training (External trainer / Civic Office)	As required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing Council meetings • Meeting procedures • Speeches for public engagements • Handling the media
Leadership (LGA)	Available to the Leader and Deputy Leader(s) as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current challenges faced by local government • Leadership behaviours, strategies, skills and mind-set
Personal safety training (External trainer / Organisational Development)	July-September 2020 In election years in March prior to City Council elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone working • Risks and hazards • Recognising warning signs • Conflict management
Service overviews (Housing Services, Community Services & Oxford Direct Services)	May – July in election years – Half day offered twice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Housing and Homelessness Services & the Housing Group • Overview of Community Services • Overview of Oxford Direct Services
Briefings on topical issues (various services)	Generally monthly on briefing dates set by Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues for the city and the Council – to be informed by feedback from members and senior officers.
ICT equipment (Business Improvement)	At induction for new members – 1 hours Drop in sessions or formal training – 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of devices, phones and PCs • Use of Outlook • Document management • Settings • Wifi access • Printing • ICT Acceptable Use Policy • Use of virtual meetings software

		(if required)
Committee software (Law and Governance)	At induction for new members. Drop in sessions as required - 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of app • Setting up committees • Public and private applications • Document library • Use of extranet • Annotating documents

Further induction support and resources

13. All newly elected members will be issued with a welcome pack including details of the induction programme, various forms for completion and essential information about the Council including its corporate priorities, senior management structure, committee remits, the Council companies and contact details for the various services.
14. All new members will be paired with a “buddy” from within the Committee and Member Services team who will provide general support through the induction process with reference to a checklist of items for new members to do or be aware of.
15. Members appointed to Cabinet for the first time will be paired with a buddy from within the senior management team to support them in that role.
16. Committee and Member Services will maintain an online “resource library” with up to date information for members including training and briefing materials.

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Remote meeting

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee on Tuesday 22 June 2021

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Committee members present:

Councillor Lygo

Councillor Mundy

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Smowton

Councillor Fry (for Councillor Tidball)

Councillor Thomas (for Councillor
Humberstone)

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance
Catherine Phythian, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Andrew Mills-Hicks, Independent Person, Independent Person non-voting

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Humberstone and Tidball sent apologies.

Substitutes are shown above.

1. Election of Chair for the year 2021/22

Cllr Susanna Pressel was elected Chair for the council year 2021-22.

2. Election of Vice Chair for the year 2021/22

Cllr Mark Lygo was elected Vice-Chair for the council year 2021-22.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Code of Conduct: summary of complaints and individual dispensations - 1 October 2020 until 14 June 2021

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report for the period 1 October 2020 to 14 June 2021. She advised that 16 complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct had been considered by herself and the Independent Persons. Although this was a high number of complaints it was important to note the wider context as three of the complaints related to the same incident; and a further 10 complaints had been

submitted by the same complainant. The Monitoring Officer referred the Committee to the learning points detailed in paragraphs 10 to 19 of the report.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there had been no dispensations to an individual member, granted under Section 33 of the 2011 Localism Act, during the period covered by the report.

The Standards Committee resolved to note the content of the report.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Standards Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020.

6. Dates of future meetings

The Standards Committee noted the dates of the future meetings.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the main areas of business for the Committee would be;

- a review of the 2021 Member Training and Induction programme which would inform the arrangements for the 2022 programme
- endorsement of a new Code of Conduct for Members for recommendation to Council for adoption; the draft would be based on the LGA model and developed in collaboration with the other Oxfordshire local authorities.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.15 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 14 September 2021

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.