

**To: Standards Committee**

**Date: 13 December 2013**

**Report of: Head of Law and Governance**

**Title of Report: Update on Ethical Standards Issues.**

**Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report**: To provide an update report to the Committee.

**Report Approved by:**

**Legal:** Jeremy Thomas

**Finance:** Nigel Kennedy

**Policy Framework:** None

**Recommendation:** That the Committee note the report.

**Introduction**

1. This report updates the Committee on several issues concerned with the operation of the ethical standards regime within the Authority.

**Register of Interests**

1. All City Councillors have been reminded of the opportunity to re-fresh their register of interests. The register of interests is published on the Council’s website.

**Councillor Training Generally**

1. The Members Allowances Scheme requires every councillor to attend Code of Conduct training, annually, to refresh their knowledge of the Code and their responsibilities as Members. Failure to attend Code training results in a member being ‘docked’ 15% of their basic allowance until such time as training is undertaken. The requirement also applies to members who sit on planning and licensing committees. All Members attended the required training and as a consequence no Member had their allowance ‘docked’.
2. Council has agreed a draft programme of meetings for 2014/15 which includes 3 days set aside for new Member induction ( half of the City Council seats are up for election in May 2014).

**Code of Conduct Training**

1. All councillors attended code training in 2013, which was expanded to include an explanation of freedom of information and data protection issues as they applied to Councillors. Code training was also offered to parish councils with Blackbird Leys Parish Council taking up the offer and receiving the training.
2. In total the Monitoring Officer delivered 5 separate training sessions for City Councillors - half the number of training session as last year.

**Planning and Licensing Training**

1. Planning and licensing training was attended by all new Members and appointees to either planning or licensing committees. Next year Officers propose a series of licencing training sessions be run in-house rather than the externally run, one day session currently offered. This is designed to be a more flexible arrangement.

**Independent Persons Workshop**

1. Ben Simpson attended an Independent Person’s workshop in November and will update the committee at the meeting.

## Annual Report 2012/13

1. The Committee on Standards in Public Life published its Annual Report 2012/13 in August 2013. An extract on standards in local government is attached as Appendix 1.

## Financial Implications

1. There are no financial implications in connection with the recommendation in this report.

**Recommendation**

1. That the Committee note the report.

**Name and contact details of author:**

Sarah Claridge

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

Tel: 01865 252402

E-mail: sclaridge@oxford.gov.uk