

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS

A.1 COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT 2019/23

(Report prepared by Keith Simmons)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is submitted to this Committee in order to ensure that the Committee is aware of the development of the attached Statement, has the opportunity to input into the Statement and can be re-assured that within the overall ambit of good governance at the Council the need to support the development of Councillors in their roles is being given further recognition through the development of the Statement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Councillor Development Statement 2019-23 has been drafted and is set out at Appendix A to this report. Ensuring that Councillors are as best equipped as practically possible to fulfil the range of responsibilities that role entails is a key component to delivering good governance.

The Statement at Appendix A seeks to provide the overarching position in respect of Councillor development at the Council; addressing needs analysis and different modes of provision to address those needs. The Committee is asked to consider the draft Statement and determine whether to endorse it for adoption as the framework for Councillor development over the term of current Council. The Statement will be kept under review and, should there be a need to substantially update, refine and amend it there will be a further report to this Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- (a) Receives and considers the draft Councillor Development Statement 2019/23 at Appendix A to this report;**
- (b) Records the commitment of this Committee to seeing good Councillor development as a key component of good governance; and**
- (c) Endorses the draft Councillor Development Statement 2019/23 at Appendix A; and**
- (d) Notes that the Statement will be kept under review and any substantial alteration to it will be the subject of a further report to this Committee.**
- (e) Endorses that the Head of Democratic Services and Elections shall be authorised to make minor amendments to the Statement.**

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The contents of the report and subsequent decision of the Standards Committee will enable the Council to demonstrate good governance in connection with decision-making processes and monitoring of Member training.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance

The cost of external training organised for elected Members is met through a specified training budget and is therefore within existing resources.

Risk

The integrity of Members, their decision-making and that of the Council and its committees, are part of good governance. Appropriate training should minimise or eradicate the risk of legal challenge through statutory appeals or judicial review.

LEGAL & CONSTITUTIONAL

Mandatory attendance at site visits, briefings and specific training as a pre-requisite for Members (and named substitutes) of the Council's Audit, Licensing & Registration, Planning and Standards Committees is part of the Council Procedure Rules included within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Planning and Licensing decisions can be challenged by specific statutory appeal routes in addition to being subject to judicial review on administrative grounds.

Various pieces of legislation provide criteria to be considered for the majority of decisions taken by the Councillors in meetings. Knowledge of the relevant legal provisions and how these are applied, together with general decision-making principles are essential in those areas.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below. Crime and Disorder/Equality and Diversity/Health Inequalities/Area or Ward affected/Consultation/Public Engagement.

Wards Affected: All

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

CURRENT POSITION

The Standards Committee, as part of its annual work programme since 2014 has received a report providing details of the mandatory training provided to members of the Planning and Licensing and Registration Committees.

It is clearly in the remit of this Committee to concern itself with good decision making principles and therefore the arrangements of the Council in respect of Councillor development to support that decision making.

The draft Statement set out at Appendix A includes the provision currently available for Councillors; together with measures to enhance that provision and place it within a context of a needs analysis for Councillors to ensure individual requirements are addressed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

There are no background papers arising from this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Draft Councillor Development Statement 2019/23