

**Agenda item:**



**Walsall Council**

**Standards Committee – 8 October 2007**

**Development of short/medium term training plan for elected members – 2007/08**

**Summary of Report**

To advise the Committee of the development of short/medium term training plan for elected members for 2007/08

**Recommendations**

- (1) That the content of the report be noted;
- (2) That the Committee agrees the development of short/medium term training plan for elected members for 2007/08.

**Resource and legal considerations**

None arising from this report.

**Citizen impact**

None arising from this report.

**Environmental impact**

None arising from this report.

**Performance and risk management issues**

None arising from this report.

**Equality implications**

None arising from this report.

**Consultation**

None

**Background papers**

All published


**Signed:**

**Assistant Director of Legal  
and Constitutional Services**

**Date:** 25 September 2007

**Contact Officer**

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Member Services Officer

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## Report detail

This report has been completed so that members of the Standards Committee can consider the development of a short/medium term training plan for elected members during 2007/08.

Members who are elected to committees at annual council at the end of May are routinely invited to attend training courses to execute their duties on the following committees:

- Audit
- Licensing
- Development Control
- Appointments Panel
- Employment Appeals
- Standards
- Hearing Panel

In the case of all of these committees (except Audit and Standards Committee who arrange training sessions which allow members to increase their knowledge and develop their skills base to exercise the function of the committee), members have to complete a training course before they are allowed to sit on the committee.

Historically, officers from Member Development have arranged courses that have specifically been aimed at elected members and have covered some of the following areas which have addressed both professional and personal skills:

- Managing Personal Stress
- Risk Management
- Housing Benefits Awareness
- Freedom of Information Act
- Children's Act – Every Child Matters
- Presentation Skills
- Budget Setting in the Council
- Negotiation & Influencing Skills
- Equalities – Basic Awareness
- Listening to Local People
- Speed Reading

It is important that any training programme which is approved by the Standards Committee forms part of a members continual development programme.

All members are playing their part in leading the Council forward and have the right to be supported to undertake their duties and responsibilities. It is

important that they are kept up to date on the key issues that affect the council as a whole as well allowing them to carry out their committee/cabinet duties.

The first stage in developing a training plan is to obtain members thoughts on the issues that they would be interested in attending training courses on.

A form will be included with Members' Digest which will be published at the end of September/beginning of October. Members will be given three weeks to return their completed forms. This will provide the opportunity for members to highlight training courses of their own design by asking them to comment on the areas that personally interest them. A copy of the form has been included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Results from this initial research will be available in time for the next Standards Committee in January 2008.

We have given some thought to the method of delivery and believe that the best way of training the greatest number of members is to present a half a hour session before a Group Meeting. Ideally, it would be best to present 4 courses a year or one per quarter to members in this way.

**Appendix 1**  
**Extract from supplementary article in Members' Digest**

**Member's Training**

The Standards Committee has the responsibility for training members to successfully execute their constituency role in addition to understanding the role of the backbencher and committee, chair and portfolio holder, the operation of quasi-judicial committees, code of conduct and administration procedures.

The committee would like to develop a short/medium term training plan linked to the identified needs of our elected members.

Could you please complete the form below by ticking your preferences and return it to Jo Whitehouse, Member Services Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP by Friday, 2 November 2007.

We value and thank you for your comments.

I would be interested in attending training courses which cover:  
(Please tick all subjects that apply)

How decisions are made at Council

How call-in works

How the complaints procedure works

How the Members' Code of Conduct works

How the Officers' Code of Conduct works

Sanctions

How to chair a committee

I would like to attend training courses that address the following areas:  
(Please complete as necessary)