

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

25 MARCH 2021

PRESENT

Councillor K. Procter (in the Chair).

Councillor Miss L. Blackburn (Vice-Chair), Councillor G. Coggins, Councillor B. Hartley, Councillor D. Jarman, Councillor P. Myers, Councillor J.D. Newgrosh, Councillor D. Western, Mr. D. Goodman, Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths, Mr R. Brown, Mr A. Rudden,

Independent Persons - Ms N. Jackson and Mr M. Whiting

In attendance

Jane Le Fevre	Monitoring Officer
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. S. Carr and K.G. Carter

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 16 December 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

22. LGA MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

The chair provide an introduction to the report that had been circulated. The Chair then handed over to the Monitoring Officer to add any additional points. The Monitoring Officer added that the Model Code of Conduct had not changed significantly from the draft that the Committee received in September 2020. There were a number of areas that required clarification through guidance that the LGA were to release and some required legislation to be passed before Councils could enact them. The aspects of the code were very similar to those within the Council's current code of conduct with the main difference being the way the code was written. When the previous model code came out Trafford had led on a GM review of the model code by the Chief Legal Officers, which led to the creation of a GM Code of Conduct used by all ten authorities. The Chief Legal officers were to look at the New Model Code in two weeks' time and it was proposed that work should dovetail with the work Trafford were doing to ensure that the Council ended up with a Code that worked from a GM perspective as well as the Trafford perspective.

Councillor Blackburn noted that point 2.3 of the report mentioned the variations between GM authorities and asked whether it was known as to what the variations might be. The Monitoring Officer responded that the local variations were usually around how breeches of the code were dealt with in an area. The Monitoring Officer offered to provide some examples of the variations across GM when the item was being considered by the working group.

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Councillor Blackburn asked about the large percentage of Council's that were not planning to adopt the code. The Monitoring Officer responded that percentage reflected the number of Council's who had no plans to adopt the code at that time but it was expected that the number would decrease especially once the guidance had been released.

An independent Person noted that at the last meeting an action plan was brought to the meeting which had a number of items still outstanding and asked whether this work superseded that work. The Monitoring Officer responded that updating the Council's Code of Conduct was a continuation of that work rather than superseding it. The Independent Person followed up by asking whether any points regarding the New Model Code should be raised at the meeting or whether they should be submitted afterwards for consideration by the working group. The Monitoring Officer responded that any feedback should be provided to the working group to inform their considerations.

The Chair asked when volunteers for the working group would need to express their interest. The Monitoring Officer asked for Committee Members to contact the Governance Officer with their expression of interest in joining the group.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recommendations of the report be agreed.
- 3) That Members contact the Governance Officer if they wish to take part in the Code of Conduct review.

23. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Chair gave a brief overview of the report that had been circulated with the agenda. The overview concluded with the proposals laid out within the report and then handed over to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer added that the training offered to Councillors was an important part of what enabled Trafford Councillors to fulfil their roles effectively and so it was felt that the Committee should be informed on what the training offer entailed. Within the package there were a number of incentives proposed to increase uptake of training courses by members and to allow the public to be able to see what training the Councillors who represented them had received.

Councillor Hartley asked which modules would be covered in the sessions held prior to Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer responded that the HR Development team were looking to create a training programme from the training sessions available and additional training sessions were being developed. The Committee were informed that if they or any other Councillors identified a need for training they could contact either the Member Development Steering Group, the Monitoring Officer, or the Committee directly.

Councillor Hartley asked whether the councillor induction training sessions could be offered to all Trafford Councillors and whether multiple sessions could be held to enable more councillors to attend. The Monitoring Officer responded that in the

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current environment it was unknown whether sessions would be held in person or if they would be conducted virtually. The Council were looking to record sessions held in person to be made available to all Councillors afterwards. The pre Council Meeting sessions were also to be recorded and made available to all Trafford Councillors to maximise the opportunity for participation.

Councillor Blackburn stated that although all Councillors were corporate parents of children and young people in the care of the Council there were very few who knew of this responsibility. Councillor Blackburn asked whether there could be corporate parenting training included within the training package. The Chair supported the suggestion and asked that it be passed on to the Member Development Steering Group.

Councillor Coggins noted that Carbon Literacy Training for Members was not listed as part of the training programme and asked when this was to be provided. The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the Carbon Literacy Training had been discussed by the Corporate Leadership team for staff and members. The Monitoring Officer said that an update would be provided to Councillor Coggins.

One of the Independent Persons noted that the key training modules were listed as core training rather than mandatory training. The Independent Person was aware that other Councils had mandatory training modules for councillors to be able to sit on quasi-official committees and asked whether this was something that Trafford had considered. The Monitoring Officer responded that Trafford did have a mandatory training requirement for quasi-official committees in place.

Councillor Myers raised concerns around holding training sessions prior to Council meetings, especially when the meetings were held in person. One concern was that Council meetings were already two and a half or three hours long and adding an extra hour without a break or refreshments was asking a lot from Councillors. Councillor Myers second concern was for Councillors who worked who would struggle to get to the Council for half past five. The Monitoring Officer responded that the proposal was for the training sessions to run from half past five to six thirty and for Council meetings to start at seven to provide them with half an hour break before the meeting. The sessions would also be recorded and shared virtually with all Councillors so that those who could not arrive by five thirty would still be able to receive the training.

Mr Griffiths voiced his support for the proposed programme, particularly the aspect of having recognition of training completed, and asked whether the Council were looking at other local authorities programmes for ideas on how to develop Trafford's offer further. The Monitoring Officer responded that Trafford worked closely with the LGA programme and there was active information sharing between all Greater Manchester authorities.

Councillor Jarman asked about the GDPR training and why Members who had previously completed the training were still being asked to complete it. The Monitoring Officer responded that it was a requirement for GDPR training to be completed on an annual basis. Councillor Blackburn added that they had difficulty in logging into the system to complete the GDPR training. The Monitoring Officer

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responded that they would provide contact details for training officer who would be able to aid Councillor Blackburn to access the training.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recommendations within the body of the report be agreed.
- 3) That the request for corporate parent training be passed onto the Member Development Steering Group.
- 4) That the Monitoring Officer provide an update on the Carbon Literacy Training Programme to Councillor Coggins.
- 5) That contact details for the officer who supported the GDPR training modules be passed onto Councillor Blackburn.

24. MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the position across Trafford remained very positive despite the additional strains caused by the pandemic. There had been a low level of complaints received during the year with only one still under review. The Monitoring Officer passed on her thanks to all Councillors for their efforts during the pandemic as well as to the Committee and the Independent Persons for their support during the year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 7.15 p.m.