



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT COMMITTEE – 27 APRIL 2023
Subject	MEMBER TRAINING
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Nigel Robbins, Chair of Audit Committee.
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update the Committee on the recommendations of Full Council relating to Code of Conduct training for elected members
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	<p><i>That Audit Committee resolves to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Agree that training on the Members' Code of Conduct is made mandatory for all councillors and should be undertaken at least once in a councillor's term of office, within six months of their election.</i><i>2. Agree to receive annual reports on member training courses undertaken.</i><i>3. Recommend any other training courses which should be made mandatory for all councillors.</i><i>4. Request that the Constitution Working Group considers recommending to Council amendments to the Constitution to reflect the requirements for councillors to attend mandatory training.</i>
Corporate priorities	Deliver the highest standard of service
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Members Development Strategic Steering Group (Cllrs Cunningham, Ind



	& Spivey), supported by officers.
--	-----------------------------------

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This Committee has a responsibility to promote, maintain and assist the achievement of high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. This includes a responsibility to secure adequate and appropriate training of councillors and co-opted members on the Code.
- 1.2 Council at its meeting on 15 March 2023 agreed to adopt the Gloucestershire wide Code of Conduct for Members. The new Code will be coming into effect from the new municipal year.
- 1.3 The draft minutes from Council on 15 March 2023 state; "*There was a query to the Monitoring Officer about requests to make the training mandatory and how this might be possible to enforce. It was noted that the Audit Committee had responsibility for standards and this would be discussed at the next Audit Committee on 27 April 2023*". With this in mind this Committee's views are sought.

2. MEMBER TRAINING AND INDUCTION PROGRAMME

- 2.1 At the local elections on 4 May 2023, all seats on the Council will be up for election. In preparation for supporting councillors post-election, both in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, and the Member Development Strategic Steering Group, officers have drawn up a member training and induction programme. The programme includes some planned induction and training sessions which are specifically aimed at new councillors, as well as sessions that are aimed at all councillors, or councillors with certain responsibilities (e.g. members of planning and licensing committees who must attend the relevant training prior to determining any application).
- 2.2 New councillors will be invited to attend a choice of two welcome sessions to be held at different times of day on 9 and 10 May. Returning councillors will also be welcome to attend these sessions. These welcome sessions will include, amongst other agenda items, a light touch training session on the Code of Conduct for Members. This would be followed with more in-depth Code of Conduct training planned for later in the month.
- 2.3 In addition to training provided by the Council, either directly or indirectly, councillors will be signposted to other training resources such as training sessions and webinars hosted by the Local Government Association and other external providers across a number of subject areas.



3. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

3.1 There was significant support at Full Council on 15 March 2023 to make training on the Code of Conduct mandatory for all councillors.

3.2 In summary, the purpose of Code of Conduct training is three-fold:

- To assist councillors in modelling expected behaviour commensurate with the Nolan Principles;
- To set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against a councillor;
- Protect the councillor, public, fellow councillors and officers and the reputation of local government.

3.3 It is not currently mandatory under the Council's Constitution for councillors to undertake training on the Code of Conduct, although this has been strongly encouraged. This Committee, in view of its role in encouraging high standards for Members, is recommended to consider making Code of Conduct training mandatory for all councillors.

3.4 The Committee may wish to form a view on how regularly councillors should attend Code of Conduct training. Options could be for such training to be delivered – annually, biennially or once in a members' term of office (i.e. every 4 years), which is recommended as a minimum.

3.5 Consideration should be given to what making councillor attendance at mandatory would mean in practice.

3.6 It is recommended that the Committee receives regular reports on member training and that such reports name any members who have not undertaken mandatory training. If the committee agrees to the frequency of mandatory training being once in a councillor's term of office within six months of their election then such reports would be presented to the Committee in election years after the six months have passed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council budget availability of £5,800 for member training for 2023/24, which should be sufficient to meet anticipated training and development needs during the year.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There is no legal requirement for the Council to make member training mandatory but doing so is considered good corporate governance and supportive to members.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 If members are not trained on the Code of Conduct there is a risk of an increase in the number of complaints against members.



7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 All newly elected councillors will be invited to declare any special requirements relating to the provision of training and Democratic Services will work with the individual to ensure that any such needs are met.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no climate and ecological emergencies implications arising from this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Full Council draft minutes – 15 March 2023
- Council's Constitution

- 9.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.cotswold.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@cotswold.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)