

**Time and Date**

11.00 am on Thursday, 21 March, 2024

**Place**

Committee Room 3 - Council House

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1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
  - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 December, 2023
  - b) Any matters arising
4. **Members Training and Development Update** (Pages 7 - 18)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
5. **Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality** (Pages 19 - 36)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
6. **Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality** (Pages 37 - 52)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
7. **Code of Conduct Update** (Pages 53 - 60)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
8. **Ethics Committee Work Programme 2023/24** (Pages 61 - 66)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
9. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

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Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 13 March 2024

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services Email: [suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk)

Membership: Councillors L Bigham, P Hetherton, S Nazir (Chair), E M Reeves and D Welsh

Independent Persons: S Atkinson, A Barton, R Wills, P Wiseman

Substitute Members : Councillor S Gray, M Mutton, P Seaman

**Public Access**

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**Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services**  
**Email: [suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Ethics Committee held at 11.00 am on Thursday, 14**  
**December 2023**

Present:

Members:                           Councillor S Nazir (Chair)  
  Councillor L Bigham  
  Councillor P Hetherton  
  Councillor E Reeves  
  Councillor D Welsh

Independent Persons:       S Atkinson  
  R Wills

Employees (by Service Area):

Customer and Business       I Hawi, R Sherwood  
Services:

Law and Governance:                           J Newman (Chief Legal Officer), O Aremu, S Bennett,  
  E Jones

Apologies:                           A Barton and P Wiseman

## **Public Business**

### **18.     Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **19.     Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September, 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record, subject to a minor typographical error in Minute 13.

There were no matters arising.

### **20.     Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which set out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Report relating to Coventry City Council in 2022/23. It focused on upheld complaints, compliance with Ombudsman's recommendations, where the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the LGSCO, and how the Council compares to previous years and other local authorities.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) was the final stage for complaints about Councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It was a free service that investigated complaints in a fair and independent way and provided a means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure.

Coventry City Council's complaints policy set out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council handle compliments, comments and complaints. The Council informs individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they were not happy with the Council's decision after they have exhausted the Council's own complaints process.

Every year, the LGSCO issued an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with in each Council that year. The latest letter, issued 19 July 2023, covered complaints to Coventry City Council between April 2022 and March 2023 (2022/23) (which was attached at Appendix 1 of the report).

The Committee asked questions and made comments on a number of issues including:-

- Patterns in relation to any complaints received regarding equality issues
- The Council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty
- The monitoring of complaints received with an element relating to the Duty
- Work being undertaken with services to ensure the Duty is considered and responded to and the provision of appropriate training for all staff in relation to this matter.

The Committee received assurances that work was being undertaken with the Council's Leadership Team and the Equality and Diversity Team in relation to ensuring that staff receive appropriate training in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty and that services embed the Duty in all aspects of service delivery.

**RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-**

- 1) Notes the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO complaints that were upheld.**
- 2) Notes the Council complaints process and guidance**
- 3) Notes that any cases where maladministration has been found will be reported to the Committee**
- 4) Requests that, in order to provide context, future reports provide data regarding the number of complaints received per 10,000 of the population.**
- 5) Requests that their comments in relation to the importance of ensuring that the Council complies with its Public Sector Equality**

**Duty and that appropriate training is provided to all staff be fed back to the Council's Leadership Team.**

**21. Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/Members Complaints Update**

The Ethics Committee received a report of the Chief Legal Officer that provided an update on national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of Elected Members and the local position in Coventry regarding Code of Conduct issues.

In relation to one of the national issues reported regarding planning matters, the Committee discussed advice currently available to Members when acting as Ward Councillors and how they should approach Planning Officers who are dealing with planning applications under delegated powers and are therefore "decision takers". It was noted that whilst there was clear advice for Planning Committee Members in relation to their role and issues relating to the pre-determination of applications, there was no specific advice for Councillors acting in their Ward capacity.

**RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-**

- 1. Notes the position with regard to matters concerning local authorities nationally.**
- 2. Notes the local position in relation to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and delegates any actions arising from these to the Chief Legal officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.**
- 3. Requests officers to provide guidance for Councillors, who are not Members of Planning Committee, on dealing with planning applications in their capacity as a Ward Councillor.**

**22. Ethics Committee Work Programme 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer, appended to which was the Committee's Work Programme for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Further to Minute 21 above the Committee noted that guidance for Councillors dealing with planning applications in their capacity as a Ward Councillor would be added to the Work Programme for the next meeting in March 2024.

**23. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.40am)

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Ethics Committee

21 March 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A - Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

**None**

**Title:** Members Training and Development Review 2023-24

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report provides information about the Members Training and Development Programme for 2023-24. The Members Training and Development Strategy was agreed by Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022. This is the second year of the strategy's implementation. The attached report (Appendix 1) covers:

- Core Training May 2023-February 2024
- Overall Training Attendance
- Training Delivery
- Training Information
- All-Members Seminars
- Members Feedback
- Training 2023/24- Training Matrix
- Action Plan 2024-25

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note the attached report covering the Members Training and Development Programme for 2023-24, including plans for 2024-25
- 2) Consider ways in which to increase Member's participation in training and development and to address barriers experienced in accessing the programme.
- 3) Support the continued delivery of the Members Training and Development Strategy, including actions for 2024-25

**List of Appendices included:**

Members Training and Development Strategy - Annual Review 23-24

**Other useful background papers**

Elected Members Training and Development Strategy – Council 22nd March 2022

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

Members Training and Development Advisory Panel – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Will this report go to Council?**

No



## **Report title: Members Training and Development Update**

### **1 Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Council agreed the Elected Members Training and Development Strategy in March 2022. The Members Training and Development Strategy provides a framework for Members to access a programme of training that meets their needs, as well as the needs of the organisation to deliver the ambition set out in the One Coventry Plan.
- 1.2 The strategy helps to support the development of a training culture for Members. As part of this strategy, it was agreed that there would be a core offer of training for all Members to complete during their term of office, as well as training specific to appointments to Planning and Licensing Committees.
- 1.3 The delivery of the strategy and action plan is overseen by a cross-party Members Training and Development Strategy Cabinet Member Advisory Panel, which advises and makes recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities who has responsibility for Members training.
- 1.4 This is the second year of the strategy, which enables some comparison on the previous year. Overall, there has been an increase in Members training, from an average of 6.5 training sessions attended, compared to 5.7 during 2022-23.
- 1.5 The report at Appendix 1 provides more detail on delivery of the strategy for 2023-24.

### **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Option 1 (not recommended): Not to support the programme of training and development for Members. This is not recommended, as it is important that Members have the right skills and knowledge to be able to support those they represent as well as delivery of the One Coventry Plan.
- 2.2 Option 2 (recommended): The Ethics Committee are recommended to:
  - 1) Note the attached report covering the Members Training and Development Programme for 2023-24, including plans for 2024-25
  - 2) Consider ways in which to increase Member's participation in training and development and to address barriers experienced in accessing the programme.

- 3) Support the continued delivery of the Members Training and Development Strategy, including actions for 2024-25

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Members have been consulted on both the content of this year's programme and proposals for next year in order to improve the offer made to Members for their training and development.

### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Any actions arising from this report will be implemented as soon as possible.

### **5 Comments from the Director of Resources and Finance and the Director of Law and Governance**

- 5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. The training and development programme for members is expected to be met within the existing annual revenue training budget.

- 5.2 Legal implications

None

### **6 Other implications**

None

#### **6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan**

The Elected Members Training and Development Strategy provides a framework for Elected Members to access a programme of training that meets their needs, as well as the needs of the organisation to deliver the ambition set out in the One Coventry Plan. The strategy will help to continue to support the development of a training culture for Elected Members.

#### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

#### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

No direct impact at this stage

#### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

#### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

None

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

**Report author(s):** Gennie Holmes

**Name and job title:** Scrutiny Co-ordinator

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law and Governance	05/03/24	05/03/24
Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	7/3/24	7/3/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Finance: Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	7/3/24	7/3/24
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24

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# Appendix 1 Members Training and Development Strategy

## Annual Review 2023-24

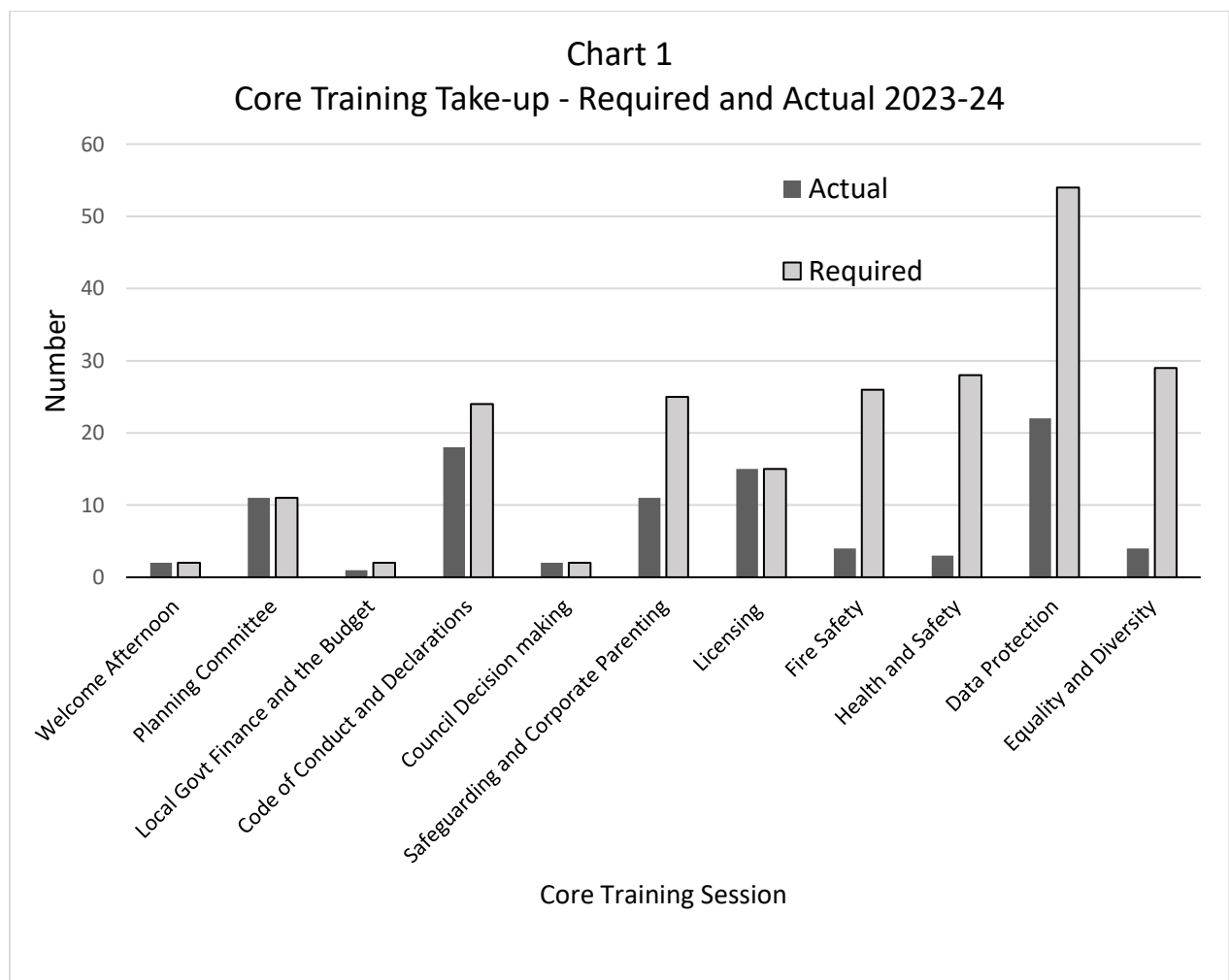
### 1. Core Training - May 2023-February 2024

There is a requirement agreed as part of the Members Training and Development Strategy, that there is a core programme of training that is offered to Members.

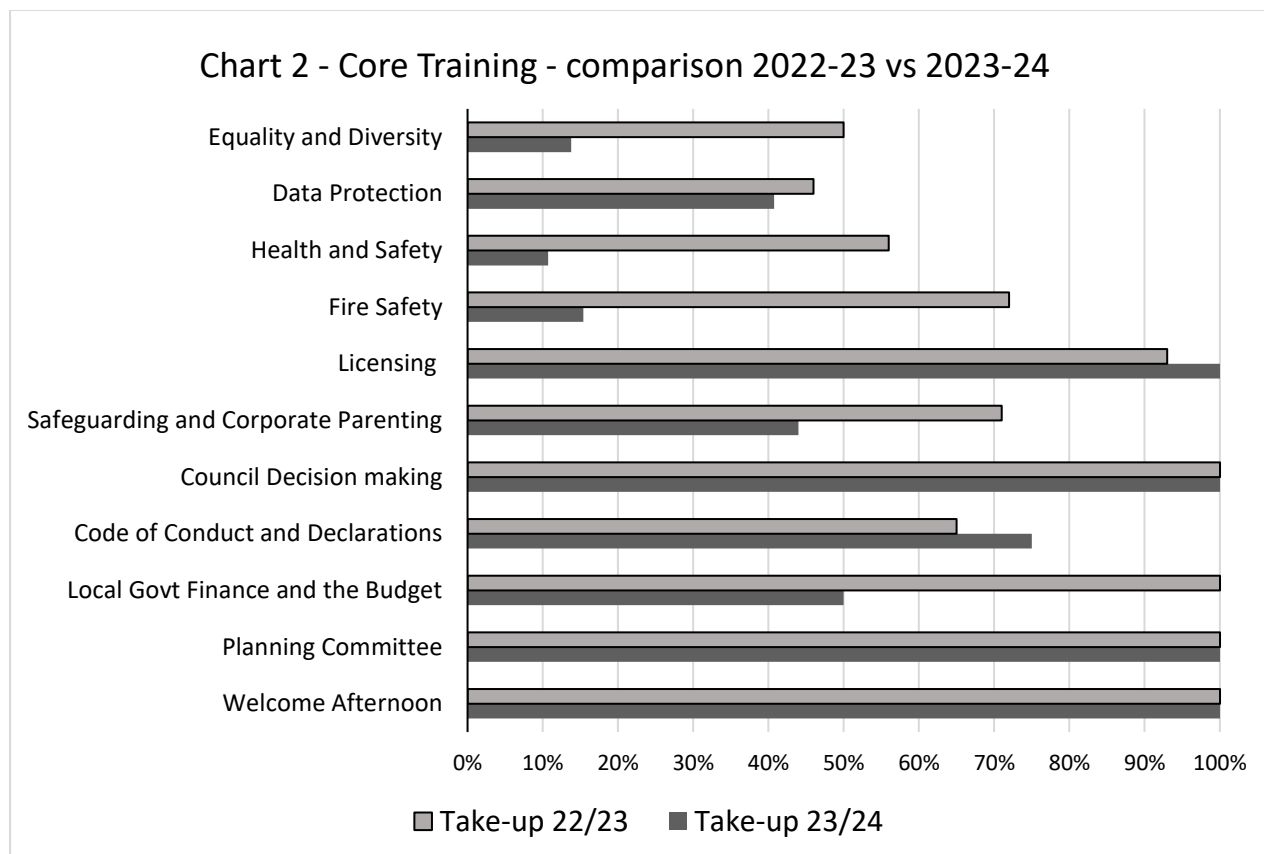
Members who are elected or re-elected in May are required to attend these sessions. Newly elected Member have an additional induction programme. These training sessions are only required once during a Member’s four-year term of office. The exception to this is Data Protection training, which is required by all Members every year, as recommended by the ICO.

If Members do not complete the core training in their first year, they will be offered the same sessions in subsequent years; this is reflected in the higher number of required attendances in 2023-24, above the 18 newly elected Members any given year.

Chart 1 shows the take up compared to required attendance for this year. There is good take up of committee related training. Of particular note is the reduction in Members completing the on-line training (Fire Safety, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Equality and Diversity)



Core training percentages are down this year from last. This is shown in Chart 2. This again could be that there are fewer newly elected Members within the cohort. This group are more likely to attend training than Members who have been in the role for a number of years. Also, any Member who did not attend the core training as part of their first year in office last year was also invited to attend the core training this year, so required numbers are higher.

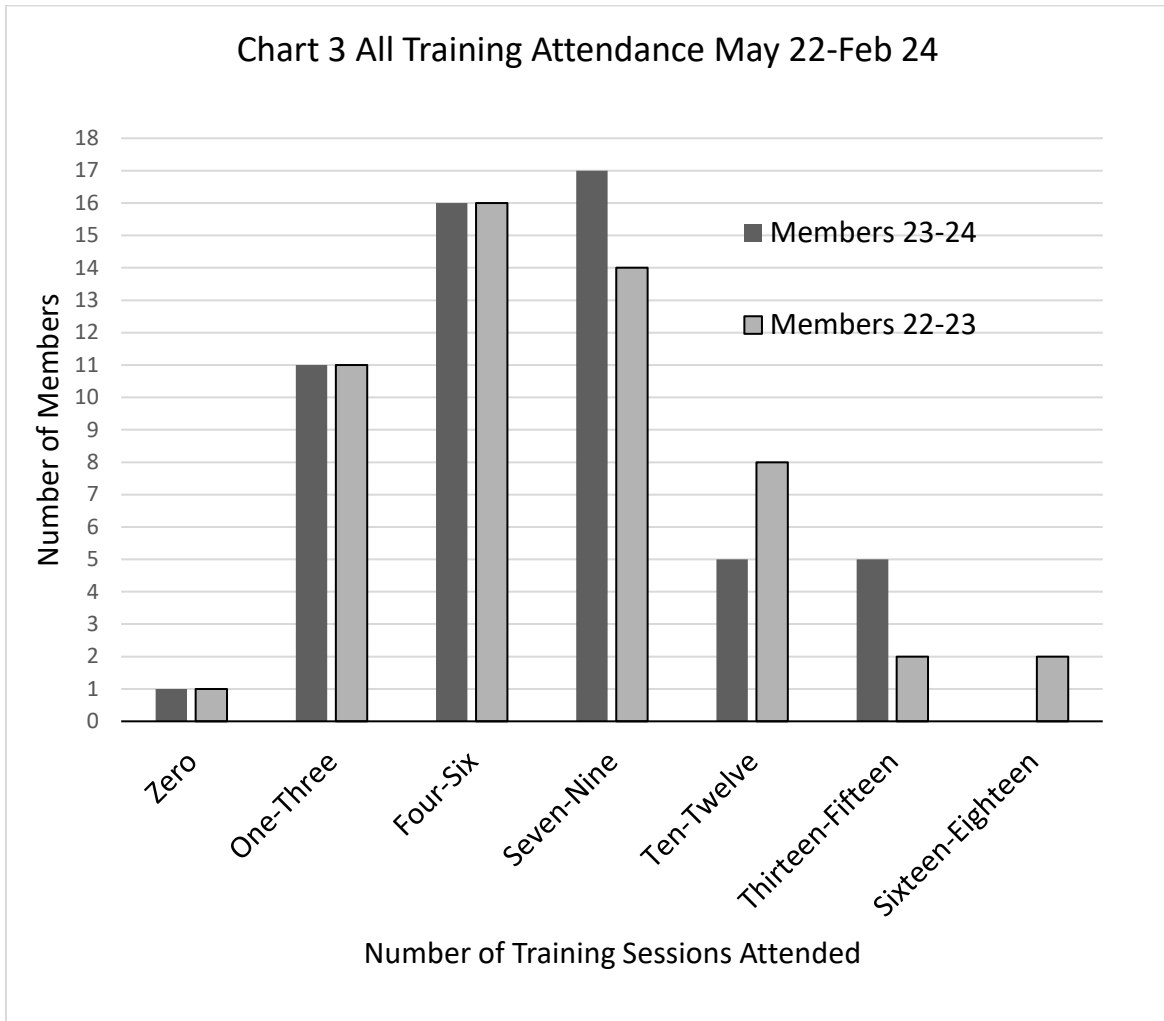


## 2. Overall Training Attendance

2.1. In total 46 training sessions have been taken up this year compared to 54 last year, which has resulted in 350 attendances by 53 Members. However, there were fewer newly elected Members in May resulting in fewer attendances at induction sessions.

2.2. As shown on Chart 3, 44 Members have attended between 1 and 9 sessions so far this year, this compares to 41 last year. There has been a general increase in number of Members attending a training session from last year, with an average of 6.5 sessions attended compared to 5.7 last year. There has also been an increase in the most frequent number of sessions attended (mode) from 5 in 2022-23 to 7 in 2023-24

2.3. Members are also able to access 1-1 digital training. This has been taken up by 31 different Members over 39 sessions between May 2023 and February 2024. These figures are not included in the overall training attendance as they are recorded separately. However, training on the new Casework tool has been included in the overall total.



### 3. Training Delivery

- 3.1. The largest provider of training has been in-house using Council officers, covering 26 sessions of the training. The LGA have provided 8, external training providers 3 sessions, 3 by the CfGS and 1 by the LGiU.
- 3.2. Training is delivered via a combination of e-learning, on-line and face to face sessions, with 23 delivered via Teams or Zoom, 13 face to face sessions and 7 via e-learning.
- 3.3. In-house training and the LGA offer is delivered free, however there were 9 training sessions that did have a cost. The only core training session with a cost associated is for Licensing Committee.
- 3.4. There were 56 attendances that had a cost associated during 23-24.

### 4. Training Information

- 4.1. Members receive information about training available through regular emails, as well as a dedicated intranet page, only accessible by Members that provides information about training, recordings of webinars, access to on-line learning and how to request one-off training, as well as the bespoke offer for Members in Digital Skills.
- 4.2. A screen shot of the intranet page is shown overleaf.

Home News Work Info Social Coventry.gov.uk Governance and Scrutiny Your favourites Favourite this page

## Elected Members Training and Development

The Elected Members Training and Development Strategy was agreed at Council on 22 March 2022.

The Elected Members Training and Development Strategy provides a framework for Elected Members to access a programme of training that meets their needs, as well as the needs of the organisation to deliver the ambition set out in the One Coventry Plan. The strategy will help to continue to support the development of a training culture for Elected Members.

One Coventry Elected Members Training and Development Strategy.

In order to ensure that a wide range of training and development is offered to Elected Members, we will be undertaking training assessments with all Elected Members to ensure that the training offered meets the needs of Councillors. A training matrix will be developed and endorsed by the Elected Members Training and Development Advisory Panel. This will then be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure it meets Elected Members' training needs.

The training matrix will provide a programme of mandatory training which all Elected Members will be required to complete. In addition to this, there will be role-specific mandatory training for those Elected Members with special responsibilities, or who sit on specific committees. These training sessions will cover both knowledge-based and enabling skills.

Elected Members Training Matrix 2023-24

Training requests

Search Members

Members home

On this page

- Training requests
- Webinars and training recordings
- Digital Skills support and ICT guides
- 1-1 Digital support
- Training notes and presentations
- Equality and diversity workshops
- E-Learning
- External training
- Induction for Elected Members

## 5. All-Members Seminars

5.1. All-Members sessions have continued to be an effective way of bringing Members up to date with current issues. There have been at least four All-Members seminars this year, which have covered:

- Homefinder and Housing
- Coventry City of Culture Evaluation
- Flooding
- One Coventry Plan

5.2. Suggested topics for All Members Seminar for next year include 'Planning for Members not on Planning Committee' and 'Enforcement'.

5.3. Members have also continued to take advantage of the training offer from the LGA. These sessions are usually free to LGA member authorities and Coventry has benefited from 13 LGA training sessions, covering 8 different courses, as well as 5 from the Leadership Essentials Programme.

## 6. Members Feedback

6.1. A short survey was circulated to Members regarding this years' programme. Initial feedback is positive. However more responses are needed to identify any ways to address barriers to accessing training. There have currently been 8 responses received.

6.2. Members will be encouraged to complete the survey and once a significant amount of feedback has been received, this will then be analysed and used to develop the action plan for 2023-24.



## 7. Training 2023/24 – Training Matrix

	Core Training	Role Specific Core Training	Supplementary Training	One-off and additional training requests
Knowledge Based	New Members Induction Programme	Licensing	All Members Seminar Homefinder & Housing	CfGS Annual Conference
	Code of Conduct	Planning	All Members Seminar City of Culture Evaluation	LGA EU voter changes
	Fire Safety Awareness*	Audit and Procurement	All Members Seminar Flooding	LGA Licensing Conference
	Safeguarding (Awareness) including Corporate Parenting*	Shareholders Panel	All Members Seminar Once Coventry Plan	LGA Adult Social Care Assurance
	Health and Safety in the Workplace*	HR Appeals	VLR test track visit	
	Local Government Finance and Budget Setting	Planning Seminars x2		
	Data Protection*			
Enabling skills	Equality and Diversity*	EIA Briefing	Chamber Skills	LGA New Members - National
			Mayor and Deputy Mayor training	LGA Leadership Essentials
			Equality Impact Assessments	LGA Handling On-line Abuse LGA Personal Safety
			Committee Chair's Training	LGiU – Being an effective Councillor
			Members roles as Directors/Trustees/Shareholders/Outside bodies	LGA Introduction to Local Govt Finance
			Case Work Manager training	LGA Data and Performance
				CfGS Bitesize sessions – Questioning Skills, Member/Officer Relationships

## 8. Action Plan 2024-25

- Refreshed induction programme
- Continued programme of All-Members training.
- Identifying barriers to accessing training
- New training based on Member feedback.
- Consider the value of external training providers.

\* Available via e-learning

## 9. Recommendations

The Ethics Committee are recommended to:

- 1) Note the attached report covering the Members Training and Development Programme for 2023-24, including plans for 2024-25.
- 2) Consider ways in which to increase Member's participation in training and development and to address barriers experienced in accessing the programme.
- 3) Support the continued delivery of the Members Training and Development Strategy, including actions for 2024-25



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Ethics Committee

21 March 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A- Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law & Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

In its work programme, the Committee has decided to review entries in the Registers of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality every six months.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to consider the entries of gifts and hospitality received by Officers from 1 July to 31 December, 2023.

**Appendices included:**

**Appendix 1:** Table of Gifts and Hospitality received by Officers: 1 July to 31 December 2023

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been, or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Committee's work programme includes an item for this meeting to review entries on the registers of officer gifts and hospitality every six months.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct for Employees sets out the requirements for employees when being offered or accepting gifts or hospitality. The basic rules are:
  - (a) Gifts
    - Personal gifts should never be accepted unless they are modest and are of token value (less than £50). The manager's permission must be obtained.
    - Items such as coffee mugs, diaries, calendars, pens or other promotional materials can be retained if they are in use in the office and can be considered to form part of the general mailings of a company.
    - Where small gifts, such as chocolates, are given as thanks for a service provided, these can be accepted if they are shared within the Team or raffled for charity.
    - Gifts worth more than £50 should be refused. If this is not possible, the manager should dispose of them to charity and record the fact in the register.
  - (b) Hospitality
    - Hospitality consisting of light refreshments, working lunch or other meals which are part of a visit, conference, meeting or promotional exercise is acceptable.
    - Invitations to social events offered as part of normal working life, or where the Council should be seen to be represented, may be accepted if authorised in advance by the appropriate Assistant Director.
    - Invitations to other types of hospitality which are not directly linked to the City Council's functions should not be accepted.

The rules relating to gifts and hospitality were amended by the Committee in July 2016 and those changes were accepted by full Council in September 2016.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 The Directorates have been asked to provide details of gifts and hospitality received during the last 6 months of 2023. The position for each directorate is set out in the Table in the Appendix to this report.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

Each Directorate was asked to provide details of their registers.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Not applicable.

**5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law & Governance**

**5.1 Financial implications**

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

**5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. However, reviewing the gifts and hospitality offered to employees on a regular basis will help to demonstrate that the Council continues to monitor and review ethical standards within the Council.

**6. Other implications**

None

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the One Coventry Plan?**

Not applicable.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Reviewing gifts and hospitality received by employees will help to reduce the risk of acceptance of inappropriate gifts or hospitality.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Keeping matters such as this under review will help to promote high standards amongst elected members and employees in accordance with the Localism Act.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None at this stage

**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

**Name and job title:** Director of Law & Governance

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

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Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	05/03/24	05/03/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Julie Newman	Director of Law & Governance	Law and Governance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Cllr S Nazir	Chair, Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24

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**APPENDIX 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023**

Officer	Date	Description	G or H?	£	Provided by	Justification	Any conflict or future tender?	Approved by	Approved Date
Social Worker	13.12.2023	Box of chocolates	G	No more than £10	Member of the public	Initially advised family not to give me a gift - they did anyway and client has a brain injury so is unlikely to understand the inappropriateness of actions	No	Team Leader	14.12.2023
Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator	01.12.2023	Breakfast/Lunch Tote bag containing the following; water bottle, pen, notebook, advent calendar, box of chocolates, wireless earbuds, power bank charger	G	£50+	Sky	I attended an event at SkyHQ in London to celebrate the Sky Up programme. At the end of the event, I was given a tote bag containing the items. I wasn't aware of the contents of the bag until I had left the event. Note Digital devices have not been kept and will be made available to VCSE organisations via #Cov Connects Device Bank	No	Digital Services and Inclusion Leader	20.12.2023
Digital Service and Inclusion Lead	01.12.2023	Breakfast/Lunch Hospitality bag - earbuds, power bank, notepad/pen, chocolates, advent calendar, travel mug	G	Without the earbuds, power bank under £50	the Cabinet Office	Did not realise the earbuds/power bank were in the bag. Only realised when leaving the event. Digital kit - Earbuds and power bank has not been kept - added to #Cov Connects Device Bank	No	Head of Customer Services	20.12.2023

				Earbuds approx £83, Power bank £22.75					
Social Worker	14.12.2023	Box of Chocolates	G	No more than £10	Member of the public	Has been advised on numerous occasions that she cannot give me any gifts. I accepted these chocolates on the understanding that they would be shared with my colleagues in the office.	No	Team Leader	15.12.2023
Principal Officer	26.10.2023	Invitation to the HEA Conference including dinner and hotel stay for 2 members of staff	H	£300	Event organiser	The conference is an industry event where we learn about new innovation, advancements and rising issues with the lighting and highways sector. Allows us to make multiple new contacts for services we require with key participants in the industry. Allows us get more competitive quotations for when we require contractors. I cleared this through Line Managers	No	Head of Traffic	30.10.2023
Service Manager	29.09.2023	CBS and SBITC would like to invite you to our Befriending /Dementia support community event held in the Coventry Lounge on the 7 <sup>th</sup> October	H	Not known	Sky Blues in the Community (SBitC)	Coventry Dementia Partnership Hub (CDPH) have a number of partners including SBitC, we would be attending to support their Dementia Community Active event as well as promoting the hub's work and seeking opportunities to work with other partners.	No	Head of Service Localities and Social Care Operations	02.10.2023

		<p>Vs Norwich 3pm ko at the CBS Arena. Itinerary as follows. Coventry Lounge on matchday. Guests can arrive up to two hours before kick-off and for our usual befriending events, we'd go with meet around 1.30pm meet and ticket collection at the Jimmy hill Statue. On arrival into the lounge we will serve tea and coffee , then a light lunch of mixed sandwiches and hot potato wedges. At some point before kick- off, we have a CCFPA guest appearance interviewed by Harry Roberts and joining us today we will also have a few former players for this special occasion courtesy of CCFPA. 2.45pm out to watch the</p>							
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		match with seats in the Directors' Box area. Half time – back to the Lounge for tea and coffee. All guests receive a match-day programme and team sheet. After the game we then have an interview with today's man-of the Match – timings are a bit variable on this and it's usually about 45-60 mins after the final whistle.							
Library and Information Assistant, Relief Register	08.09.2023	£5 in cash	G	£5	Member of the public	Tried to return the gift but the customer would not accept it as they felt Emily had gone above and beyond to help them	No	Operations Manager Community Libraries	14.09.2023
Service Development manager	Monday 11th September 2023 to either Thursday 14th or Friday 15th September 2023	Flights, accommodation and expenses for research project led by Coventry University	H	Travel and accommodation + subsistence = €699		The Library Service agreed to be a partner on this project for three main reasons. 1. Increase the delivery of activities to tackle digital exclusion in Libraries. A large part of our service delivery comes from answering Library user enquiries and then	No. Bergen Seminar Key benefits for the Library Service 1.While Library staff have tested the game	Strategic Lead Transformation and Change	04.08.2023

					<p>expanding on these to demonstrate the benefit of digital services. While the Library does provide some advertised sessions - I-Pad cafes and Learn My Way courses these are limited. 2. A recent digital survey of all library staff in England concluded two main staff concerns for Library staff on running digital sessions. Firstly, that staff do not have sufficient digital knowledge to answer all user questions and secondly that they lack the confidence to undertake a tutorial role. The appeal of the games being tested are that the required knowledge is contained within the game and that staff undertake a facilitator role rather than as a tutor. 3. By partnering with Coventry University, we get to see first-hand the research being undertaken and thereby get to understand the impact of the sessions in a more professional manner.</p>	<p>with Library users there is still much to learn and understand about using games as a format for learning - this will be a key component of the three-day event</p> <p>2.Libraries have only tested a limited number of games - the Seminar will provide an opportunity to experience a wider range of games but more importantly understand better the learning experience game playing has produced</p>		
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								<p>from a much wider sample size 3. Attendance will allow Coventry Libraries to lead nationally on discussions within the Library sector on the potential for learning through game playing. The game has already been demonstrated to a number of different Library Services throughout the country and has generated a great deal of interest.</p>	
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Digital Services and Inclusion Lead	Monday 11th September 2023 to Friday 15th September	Flights, accommodation, food and expenses for research project being led by Coventry University	H	Travel and accommodation +subsistence =€699	Coventry University	#Cov Connects agreed to be a partner on this project for three main reasons. 1. As an emerging programme #CovConnects aims to work in partnership with organisations to understand digital exclusion, look at innovative ways to increased inclusion and to evaluate and measure the impact of any interventions. By partnering with Coventry University, we have gained their knowledge and expertise, particularly in this area relating to innovation of teaching digital and data literacy in play based formats. 2. The #CovConnects programme has led community testing with our community partners earlier in the year, gaining feedback and evaluation as to the effectiveness of the games and we are keen to continue to learn and develop the games, and ensure the voice of inclusion is embedded. 3.#CovConnects is keen to explore the innovative ways digital and data literacy skills can be delivered, as digital exclusion is incredibly complex, a more diverse range of 'interventions' may enable better outcomes for	No. Key benefits for attending the Bergen Seminar for #CovConnects. 1. Increased understanding and knowledge relating to the games delivery, knowledge of using play based approached to digital and data literacy and underpinning research. 2. To date #CovConnects have only delivered one game model in the community-the seminar will provide the opportunity to test and understand a more	Head of Customer Services	04.08.2023
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						residents supported via our programme.	diverse programme of digital and data literacy games, and their underpinning research, but also for #CovConnects to promote the accessibility and inclusion elements of game design. 3. This opportunity will allow us to demonstrate #CovConnects as an innovative programme nationally, as this is an area other LA's have been keen to follow based on our initial conversatio		
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							<p>ns, particularly as a tool for community digital skills delivery. We will use this opportunity to connect with other countries across Europe involved with the project, and capture the experience and learnings to share across our networks. Finally Coventry University require 2-3 stakeholder s who have been involved with training and pilots to attend as a requiremen t of the funder.</p>		
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Director of Business, Investment & Culture	09.10.2023	Investment dinner at Party Conference, Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities	H	£58	Cavendish Consulting	To represent the council as Director of Business, Investment and Culture. Attract Investment into the city.	No	Chief Executive	28.02.2024
Director of Property Services and Development	09.10.2023	Investment dinner at Party Conference, Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities	H	£58	Cavendish Consulting	To represent the council as Director of Property Services and Development. Attract Investment into the city.	No	Director of Finance	28.02.2024
Chief Executive	09.10.2023	Investment dinner at Party Conference, Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities	H	£58	Cavendish Consulting	To represent the council as Chief Executive. Attract Investment into the city.	No		28.02.2024

Policy & Public Affairs Lead	09.10.2023	Investment dinner at Party Conference, Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities	H	£58	Cavendish Consulting	To represent the council as Strategic Lead Policy and Public Affairs. Attract Investment into the city.	No	Director of Partnerships and Performance	28.02.2024
Chief Executive	10/08/23	Lunch at the Ivy, Birmingham	H	£40.00	Turner Townsend	Working lunch with a small group of Chief Executives to discuss skills in the retrofit and construction industry.	No	N/A	N/A
Chief Executive	13/08/23	Attendance at LGC Summit - including x1 night accommodation at INNSiDE Manchester Hotel and informal dinner.	H	£200	Local Government Chronicle (LGC)	National conference and professional networking with other local authority chief executives discussing current issues facing local government.	No	N/A	N/A
Chief Executive	11/10/23	Dinner at St Mary's Guildhall as part of the BITC Seeing is Believing visit.	H	£70.00	Business in the Community	These visits bring a group of business leaders into communities to see the challenges being faced and the role that business can take in tackling these issues.	No	N/A	N/A
Chief Executive	26/10/23	Wildlife Photographer of	H	£50.00	CV Life	Representing CCC alongside local partners.	No	N/A	N/A

		the Year Exhibition and dinner							
Director of Finance & Resources	30/11/23	Society of Municipal Treasurers (SMT) Presidential Dinner and conference including x 1 night accommodation at the Belfry Hotel	H	£200	SMT (Various commercial sponsors)	This is a professional organisation for Local Authority Section 151 officers which provides access to networks, analysis and information.	No - SMT is not an organisation that provides services	Chief Executive	Yes



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Ethics Committee

21 March 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A- Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law & Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report sets out details of declarations of gifts and hospitality made by Members for the period 1 July to 31 December 2023. The Committee reviewed the gifts and hospitality register entries received from 1 January to 30 June 2023 at its meeting on 28 September 2023. The Committee is asked to consider the most recent declarations.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to consider the gifts and hospitality register entries received from 1 July to 31 December 2023 and to make any recommendations that it considers appropriate.

**List of Appendices included:**

- Appendix 1: General Declarations of gifts and hospitality received between 1 July to 31 December 2023

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title: Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

**1. Context (or background)**

1.1 The Ethics Committee has, as part of its Work Programme, decided to review on a regular basis the declarations of gifts and hospitality made by Members. Appendices 1 and 2 contain copies of all declarations received from Members from 1 July to 31 December 2023.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The declarations received between 1 July to 31 December 2023 are at Appendix 1 of this report. There are 7 forms received from 7 elected Members.

2.2 There have been no requests by members of the public to view the register during this time.

2.2 The Committee is recommended to consider the declarations made in the last six months of 2023 and to make any recommendations that it considers appropriate.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 None.

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

Any recommendations of the Committee will be implemented within an appropriate time frame.

**5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law & Governance**

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

Members are required to declare Gifts and Hospitality under section 4 of the Code of Conduct for Elected Members at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. Whilst there is currently no statutory requirement for members to declare in this way, maintaining a process and register aids transparency and assists the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour as is required under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

**6 Other implications**

None

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the One Coventry Plan?**

Not applicable.

## 6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report, but a failure to implement and maintain a system of Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality can impact on the organisation's ethical behaviour and transparency.

## 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The routine declaration of gifts and hospitality received should assist in protecting Elected Members from unfounded allegations of bias and facilitate good and clear transparent decision making.

## 6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

## 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

**Name and job title:** Director of Law & Governance

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

**Tel and email contact:** 024 7697 7271 [julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	05/03/24	05/03/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Julie Newman	Director of Law & Governance	Law and Governance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Cllr S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24

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Ethics Committee

21 March 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A- Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law & Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

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**Is this a key decision?**

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### **6 Other implications**

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#### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the One Coventry Plan?**

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## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

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**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

**Name and job title:** Director of Law & Governance

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

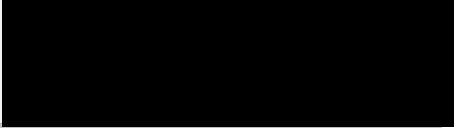
**Tel and email contact:** 024 7697 7271 [julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:julie.newman@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
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Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	05/03/24	05/03/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Julie Newman	Director of Law & Governance	Law and Governance	05/03/24	06/03/24
Cllr S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24


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## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Councillor Ridley
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Leader of the Conservative Group (Leader of the Opposition).
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	29.11.23
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Chris Smith Founder and Managing Director Centre for the New Midlands CIC
Full details of what was received	Invitation to Coventry Blaze vs Nottingham Panthers on 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 5pm-8pm Skydome, Coventry, West Midlands, CV1 3AZ. 2 x tickets.
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£24.00 x 2 = £48.00
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	To represent the city at a key local sporting event and build links with other key regional stakeholders.
Signature of member:	
Date:	01.12.23




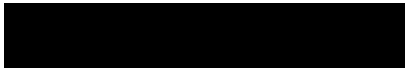
## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Cllr Linda Bigham
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Cabinet Member – Adult Services
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Meriden Women's Institute
Full details of what was received.	When I was Lord Mayor, I promised to speak to Meriden WI and then couldn't because of Covid and so I spoke on 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023. They pay speakers, and I had the cheque for £50.00 made out to the Coventry Children's Boot Fund which was one of my charities when I was Lord Mayor.
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£50
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Attended the event following a previous agreement which could not be fulfilled at the time. Accepted the cheque which will be passed to the Coventry Children's Boot Fund.
Signature of member:  Date:	  05.09.23




## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Councillor Peter Male
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Sean Rose, Head of Policy & Representation, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of President Tom Mongan.
Full details of what was received	CWCC Economic & Business Conference Complimentary Ticket. £55.00 plus vat. Event on 10.11.23.
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£55.00 per ticket exclusive of VAT– totalling £66.00
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Invited to attend the event as Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group.
Signature of member:	
Date:	30.10.23




## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Cllr Jim O'Boyle
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Cavendish Consulting
Full details of what was received	Investment Dinner at Party Conference: Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£58.00
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	To represent the Council as Cabinet Member.
Signature of member:	
Date:	23.02.24

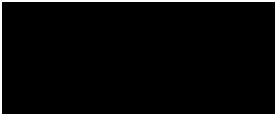




## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

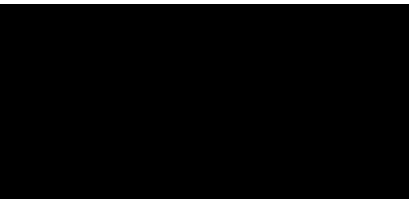
Name of Elected Member	Cllr Ram Lakha
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Elected Member
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	Received on 26 <sup>th</sup> September – Cllr confirmed acceptance on 2 <sup>nd</sup> October
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Sonian Kullar from Diversity Together
Full details of what was received	Invite by email for an Asian singing contest for Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> November at Albany Theatre
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£15.00 per person – Cllr Lakha attending on his own
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Personal Invite sent to Cllr
Signature of member:	
Date:	09.10.23

## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Cllr George Duggins
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Leader of Coventry City Council
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	Offered 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023 and accepted 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2023.  Received 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	The offer was from Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council at the time. The tickets and hospitality were provided by Warwickshire County Cricket Club/Edgbaston.
Full details of what was received	2 tickets to the Vitality Blast T20 finals plus hospitality.
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	The provider advised:  <i>"It's difficult to provide a figure for Chair's Lounge as we don't sell space in this room for major match days, it's by invitation only. The only way I can come up with an approximate costing is to go by one of our other premium areas in the ground that has a slightly reduced offering. For Final's Day, I would suggest a cost of £885.00 per person."</i>
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Representing Coventry as the Leader of the Council.
Signature of member:	
Date:	24 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct**

## Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality under Members' Code of Conduct

Name of Elected Member	Cllr David Welsh
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Cavendish Consulting
Full details of what was received	Investment Dinner at Party Conference: Coventry Business and Investment Opportunities
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£58.00
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	To represent the Council as Cabinet Member.
Signature of member:  Date:	 23.02.24





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Ethics Committee

21 March, 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A - Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Code of Conduct Update**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report updates the Ethics Committee on any national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of elected Members and the local position in Coventry with regard to Code of Conduct issues.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the position with regard to matters concerning local authorities nationally; and
2. Note the local position relating to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and to delegate any actions arising from these to the Director of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Other useful background papers**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## Report title: Code of Conduct Update

### 1. Context (or background)

1.1 The Council's Ethics Committee has agreed that the Director of Law and Governance will provide a regular update on cases relating to the Members' Code of Conduct on a national basis. This is to facilitate the Ethics Committee's role in assisting the Council with its duties under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of Member conduct.

### 1.2 The National Picture

#### 1.2.1 Mayor of London, Greater London Authority

32 complaints were made that the Mayor of London had breached the Code of Conduct for elected members.

An independent investigation commissioned by the Greater London Authority following complaints about comments made by the Mayor that inferred ULEZ objectors were "joining hands" with far-right conspiracy theorists and Covid deniers concluded the Mayor did not breach the Code of Conduct.

The independent investigation report outlines the position in respect of Freedom of Speech

[PQT complaints - Final investigation report 24 Nov 2023.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

"Freedom of speech

25. Before making my assessment of these complaints, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of the right of freedom of expression. The Mayor, Assembly Members and members of the public attending PQT as well as the protestors outside the hall were all exercising their rights of freedom of expression, which is protected by both Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the common law.

26. Crucially for the purposes of this investigation, statements on political issues or other matters of general public interest attract "enhanced protection" under the law, meaning that in practice there are relatively few limits which can be imposed on "political speech". As a result, even statements which offend, shock or disturb are protected by the law: "Free speech includes not only the inoffensive but the irritating, the contentious, the eccentric, the heretical, the unwelcome and the provocative provided it does not tend to provoke violence. Freedom only to speak inoffensively is not worth having."<sup>5</sup>

27. The reason why the law provides generous protection even to statements which others find offensive is because freedom of expression: "... constitutes one of the essential foundations of ... a [democratic] society, one of the basic conditions for its progress and for the development of every man. ... it is

applicable not only to ‘information’ or ‘ideas’ that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no ‘democratic society’.”<sup>6</sup> If the Code of Conduct process too readily interferes with comments made by elected representatives, this would exert a “chilling effect” on freedom of speech and would therefore undermine the democratic process.<sup>7</sup> 28. This means that the obligations in the Code cannot be read in isolation; they must be read in a way that gives effect to the Mayor’s right of freedom of expression.<sup>8</sup> It is not my role to decide whether what the Mayor said was fair or justified; that is a political judgment for the electorate.”

<sup>5</sup> Redmond-Bate v Director of Public Prosecutions [2000] HRLR 249

<sup>6</sup> Handyside v United Kingdom (1979-80) 1 EHRR 737, [49]

<sup>7</sup> Lingens v Austria (1986) 8 EHRR 407, [42]

<sup>8</sup> R (Mullaney) v Adjudication Panel for England [2009] EWHC 72 (Admin), [101]-[102]

Matt Lewin  
Cornerstone Barristers

24 November 2023.

### **1.2.2 Councillor Hollis, Ashfield District Council**

Councillor Hollis, Deputy Leader of Ashfield District Council, has pleaded guilty to two charges under the Localism Act 2011 of failing without reasonable excuse to notify a disclosable pecuniary interest and was fined £2,400.

Throughout the period 2019 to 2021, Councillor Hollis was the beneficial owner of a property having loaned money to a colleague to buy a property. He was re-elected twice without disclosure on his part of that financial interest. It was not suggested by the prosecution that the defendant was dishonest and it was not suggested that he benefitted from any decision made in his role as a councillor as regards his non-disclosure.

### **1.2.3 Councillor Pipe, Dorset Council**

Councillor Pipe was found to have breached the Code of Conduct and is to be allocated a behaviour mentor after he mimicked a colleague’s Irish accent over an eight-year period.

### **1.2.4 Audit report, Wrexham Council**

A report carried out by Audit Wales on governance arrangements at Wrexham Council, with a specific focus on its planning service, has found that delays in adopting key strategic documents created “significant risks” for the local authority, and relationships between some Members and officers were fractured.



The Auditor General, Adrian Crompton, noted that as a result, the Planning Service was “hindered in fulfilling its role as a key enabler across the Council.” Audit Wales undertook a review of the arrangements at Wrexham’s Planning Service and the extent to which it is supporting delivery of the Council’s overall objectives.

The report investigated and concluded that the Planning Service has appropriate governance arrangements, providing comprehensive Member training, but Member relationships with officers were “fractured”. The report warned: “Member and officer relationships appear to us to generally not be productive. We observed Members questioning professional officer advice when dissatisfied with officers’ explanations on planning policies. Members frequently undermine professional officers by requesting second opinions from external legal providers. The Council needs to consider whether Members are acting efficiently and with regard to value for money as well as how this behaviour impacts the well-being and resilience of officers.”

### **1.3 The local picture**

Complaints under the Code of Conduct

- 1.3.1** The Ethics Committee has requested that the Director of Law and Governance reports regularly on any complaints received relating to Members of Coventry City Council.
- 1.3.2** The Director of Law and Governance has received three complaints since the date of the last meeting (14 December, 2023) as at the date this report was written. One complaint has been dealt with informally the other complaints are currently being considered at Stage 1 of the complaints process.
- 1.3.3** The Director of Law and Governance will update the Committee on any further complaints received before the meeting and progress on those already received.
- 1.3.4** All complaints are handled in accordance with the agreed Complaints Protocol. No findings have been made by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation members of Coventry City Council.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

The Ethics Committee are recommended to:

- 1. Note the position with regard to matters concerning local authorities nationally;
- 2. Note the local position relating to the operation of the Council’s Code of Conduct and to delegate any actions arising from these to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

Not applicable.

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

Any actions arising from this report will be implemented as soon as possible.

**5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance**

**5.1 Financial implications**

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

**5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The issues referred to in this report will assist the Council in complying with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

**6 Other implications**

None

**6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan**

Not applicable.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

No direct impact at this stage

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None at this stage

**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

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**Directorate:** Law and Governance

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Julie Newman	Director	Law and Governance	26/02/24	26/02/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance: Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	26/02/24	27/02/24
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24

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Ethics Committee

21 March, 2024

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A- Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

Not applicable

**Title:**

Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2023/24

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report outlines areas of work for the Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2023/24. The Committee is asked to consider the Work Programme and make any suggestions for additional or alternative reports.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

**List of Appendices included:**

Ethics Committee Work Programme

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2023/24**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in the Council's Constitution and include the consideration of matters which are relevant to the ethical governance of the Council, its Members or employees. This report attaches a programme of work for the Committee, designed to assist the Committee to meet its objectives set out in the Terms of Reference, and to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted members.
- 1.2 The Committee's Work Programme takes account of the need to promote standards and addresses this in a number of ways. It is a is flexible in terms of suggestions from members of the Ethics Committee as to additional or substitute areas which they would want to consider and receive reports on.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The Work Programme includes regular items on:

- Code of Conduct/ Monitoring Officer Update
- Declarations of gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers
- Annual report to full Council
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Report

2.2 In addition the Ethics Committee factor into the Work Programme a number of matters where work is being, or about to be, undertaken across the Council, namely:

- Monitoring the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (including any legislative changes arising from the CSPL's report and / or recommendations of January 2019)
- Monitoring, and responding to, the Local Government Association's work on Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship
- The work of a Member/Officer group which is developing a local response to the LGA's guidance on intimidation in public life

2.3 The Committee is asked to consider whether there are any other matters that they would want to consider during the year or items that they would want to defer.

### **2.4 Recommendation**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

None

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Not applicable

**5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance**

**5.1 Financial implications**

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

**5.2 Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, as there is no statutory obligation on the Committee to adopt a work programme. However, the Council must comply with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and the continuation of a clear programme of work would assist in compliance for the Council as a whole, in its duty to promote high standards of ethical conduct.

**6. Other implications**

None

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the One Coventry Plan?**

Not applicable.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

If implemented, the work programme will facilitate the promotion of high standards amongst elected members in accordance with the Localism Act.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None at this stage



**Report author(s):** Julie Newman

**Name and job title:** Director of Law and Governance

**Directorate:** Law and Governance

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Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Law and Governance	28/02/24	28/02/24
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Cllr S Nazir	Chair: Ethics Committee		05/03/24	05/03/24

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## Appendix 1

### Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24

Meeting no. and date	Topics
<b>2023/4</b>	
<b>1. September 2023</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality -Inspection of Registers for first 6 months of 2023
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for first 6 months of 2023
	Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship Review
	Work Programme 2023/24
<b>2. December 2023</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report
	Work Programme 2023/24
<b>3. March 2024</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update.
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality -Inspection of Registers for last 6 months of 2023
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for last 6 months of 2023
	Guidance for those Members who are not on Planning Committee dealing with Planning Applications in a Ward Capacity
	Members Training and Development Update
	Work Programme 2023/24