

**Time and Date**

11.00 am on Thursday, 20 March, 2025

**Place**

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

- 
1. **Apologies**
  2. **Declarations of Interest**
  3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
    - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 January, 2025
    - b) Any matters arising
  4. **Members Training and Development Review 2024-25** (Pages 9 - 22)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  5. **Local Government Association (LGA) Ending Abuse in Public Life - Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit - Progress** (Pages 23 - 30)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  6. **Six Monthly Review of Members' Gifts and Hospitality** (Pages 31 - 42)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  7. **Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality** (Pages 43 - 58)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  8. **Code of Conduct Update** (Pages 59 - 66)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  9. **Work Programme for 2025/26** (Pages 67 - 72)  
Report of the Director of Law and Governance
  10. **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, 12 March 2025

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 N Akhtar, L Bigham, P Hetherton, S Nazir (Chair)  
E M Reeves

Independent Persons: S Atkinson, R Wills, P Wiseman

**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, 9**  
**January 2025**

Present:

Members:                      Councillor S Nazir (Chair)  
                                    Councillor P Hetherton  
                                    Councillor G Lloyd (Substitute for Councillor N Akhtar)  
                                    Councillor P Seaman (Substitute for Councillor L Bigham)  
                                    Councillor E M Reeves

Independent Members:      R Wills, P Wiseman

Employees (by Service Area):

Customer Services:              K Kanebi, A Le Cras

Law and Governance:            J Newman (Director), S Bennett, A West

Apologies:                      Councillors N Akhtar, L Bigham and S Atkinson

## **Public Business**

### **16.      Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **17.      Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September, 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record subject to the inclusion of the following in Minute 8 relating to "Declarations of Interest"

"The Committee noted that Councillor G Lloyd had made an entry in the Member's Gifts and Hospitality Register referred to in Minute 11 below."

### **18.      Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, which had been considered by the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership (Minute 9/24 refers) and which would also be considered at the meeting of Audit and Procurement Committee on 29th January 2025, and which set out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council in 2023/24. 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 Authority compared to previous years and other local authorities.

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 sets out how individual members of the public could complain to the Council, as well as how the Council would handle their compliments, comments and complaints. The Council also informed individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they were not happy with the Council's decision once they had exhausted the Council's complaints process.

The LGSCO issued an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with relating to that Council that year. The latest letter, issued 17 July 2024, covered complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council between April 2023 and March 2024 (2023/24).

The Committee also received a comprehensive and informative presentation at the meeting, for which the officers were commended.

**RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-**

- 1) Notes the contents of the report**
- 2) Notes the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO**
- 3) Notes the Council's updated complaints process and guidance**
- 4) Request that officers raise the comments now made by the Committee with the LGSCO in relation to the making their website more user friendly.**

**19. Ending Abuse in Public Life Council Self-Assessment Toolkit - Outcome of Evidence Gathering Exercise**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which indicated that in July 2023, the Local Government Association (LGA) issued a publication called "Debate Not Hate: Ending Abuse in Public Life for Councillors" which outlines how Councils can better support Councillors to prevent and handle abuse. External consultants worked with Councils and relevant partners to inform the report, which includes principles for Councils to consider, top tips and good practice case studies. The key findings of this report were reported to Ethics Committee on 28th September 2023 (Minute 14/23 refers).

Further to that report, a self-assessment toolkit has been developed by the LGA to support the work within Councils to address abuse of Councillors. The toolkit acknowledges the distinct roles and responsibilities held by Councillors, Councils and police in addressing instances of abuse and intimidation. It is crucial to acknowledge and understand the diverse spheres of influence within which each

entity operates and that there are limitations in their ability to address certain issues alone. By understanding their unique sphere of influence and collaborating with other stakeholders, Councils can work towards meaningful solutions for many of these challenges. As such, this toolkit is designed to be realistic and flexible in its implementation.

The toolkit was developed by a specialist abuse and harm reduction consultancy organisation, who worked closely with the LGA, a sounding group of Council officers and consulted with several national police colleagues. The toolkit is structured around the five principles outlined in the “Debate Not Hate: Ending Abuse in Public Life for Councillors” report, offering a practical approach to implementing these principles.

The five principles are as follows:

1. Creating supportive and informed spaces
2. Creating a risk-led approach
3. Creating an infrastructure
4. Creating new connections
5. Creating a culture of safety and respect

An initial assessment of the tool kit has been completed and a summary of which, together with a subsequent forward plan for Coventry, was appended to the report with the intention of creating a baseline as a starting point for this work. The report indicated that the next step will be to gather feedback from Councillors as part of the self-assessment to further inform the forward plan.

Work already delivered which contributes to this work includes information provided on the Members intranet webpages in a section called “Well-being and your safety”, which sign-posts Members to where advice and support can be found. These webpages provide links to all of the LGA materials from the Debate Not Hate campaign, as well as support offered through the Council’s Occupational Health Service. These webpages also provide a link to the “Personal Safety Guidance for Elected Members” document, as well as how to deal with online abuse and how to report harassment and intimidation.

Other actions already in progress are linking with the police on Operation Ford to identify a single point of contact, as well as a programme of personal safety workshops delivered by the police for Councillors in the New Year. A number of personal safety and awareness raising training sessions have been arranged for Councillors this municipal year, including one specifically on safety whilst election campaigning, and sessions delivered by the LGA on online abuse and harassment. 27 Councillors have accessed these sessions.

**RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-**

- 1) Notes and welcomes the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) on their Debate Not Hate campaign, including the self-assessment tool**
- 2) Notes and endorses the initial self-assessment and subsequent forward plan as appended to the report**

20. **Code of Conduct Update**

The Ethics Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which 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.

The Committee also noted the position in relation to the local parish Councils and their Code of Conduct.

**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 Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.**

21. **Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2024/25**

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Director of Law and Governance, appended to which was the Committee's Work Programme for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

22. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business - Government Consultation on the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities**

The Committee considered a presentation which outlined the key points raised in a Government Consultation on the "Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities". The Consultation seeks views on introducing measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England and ensure consistency of approach amongst Councils investigating serious breaches of their Member Codes of Conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

The Committee's views were sought and given in relation to the following issues addressed by the consultation exercise including:-

- The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct;
- A requirement for all Councils to have a formal Standards Committee to make decisions on code of conduct breaches;
- The introduction of the power for all local authorities to suspend Councillors or Mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations;
- A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period;

- A role for a national body to deal with appeals;
- How to empower victims affected by Councillor misconduct to come forward and what additional support would be appropriate.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) The Committee's views now outlined be incorporated into a corporate response to the Consultation.**
- 2) Elected Members and Independent Members be invited to a workshop to further consider the issues raised by the consultation;**
- 3) The Council's draft response be shared with Ethics Committee Members prior to it being signed off.**

**NOTE:** The Chair of the Committee agreed that this item of business should be considered as an urgent item of public business, the reason for urgency being the need to seek the Committee's views on the Consultation to inform the Council's response before the deadline for responses on 25 February, 2025.

(Meeting closed at 12.30pm)

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Ethics Committee

20 March 2025

**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 2024-25**

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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 2024-25. The Members Training and Development Strategy was agreed by Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022. This is the third year of the Strategy's implementation.

The attached report (Appendix 1) covers:

- Core Training May 2024-February 2025
- Overall Training Attendance
- Training Delivery
- Training Information
- All-Members Seminars
- Members Feedback – Key Highlights
- Training 2024/25 - Training Matrix
- Action Plan 2025-26

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note and endorse the attached report covering the Members Training and Development Programme for 2024-25, including plans for 2025-26 (Appendix 1)
- 2) Consider ways in which to increase Members’ 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 2025-26

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 - Members Training and Development Strategy - Annual Review 2024-25

**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 – 3rd March 2025

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Members Training and Development Review 2024-25**

### **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 third year of the Strategy, which enables some comparison on the previous years. On average Members undertook 4.7 training sessions in 2024-25. This was fewer than in the first two years of the strategy when the average number of sessions attended per member was 6.5 during 2023-24 and 5.7 during 2022-23.
- 1.5 The report at Appendix 1 provides more detail on delivery of the Strategy for 2024-25.
- 1.6 Following the LGA Peer Challenge a recommendation was made to consider ways in which to increase Member's participation in training and development and to address barriers experienced in accessing the programme. A questionnaire was circulated to all Members. A total of 42 responses were received. The key message from the survey was that the main barriers were time availability to attend training, and that training is offered at the wrong time of day. However, the largest response to the question What currently prevents you from accessing training was "Nothing – I can access the training I want to", with 19 responses.
- 1.7 Members were also asked about addressing barriers, the highest two responses were "More on-line training" (21) and "More evening training" (12). There have already been several sessions offered in the early evening and training has continued to be offered both on-line and in person. For more detail see Appendix 1.

### **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 and endorse the attached report covering the Members Training and Development Programme for 2024-25, including plans for 2025-26 (Appendix 1)
- 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 2025-26

### **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. Responses to the survey can be found in Appendix 1

### **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	5/3/25	5/3/25
Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	5/3/25	7/3/25
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance: Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	5/3/25	10/3/25

Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		10/03/25	10/03/25
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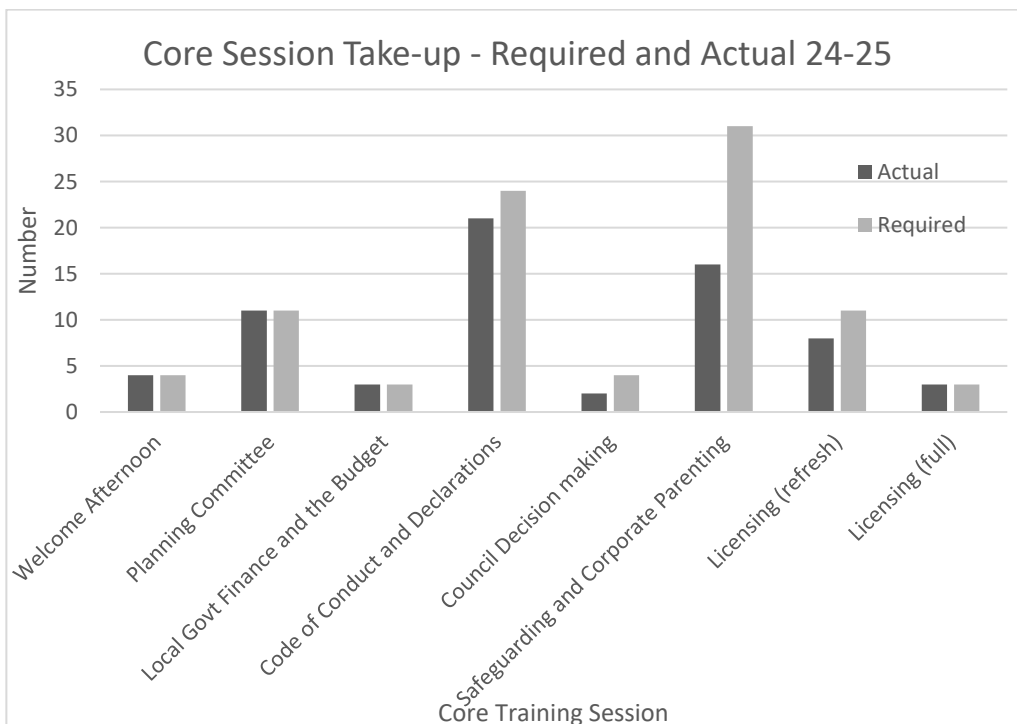
## Members Training and Development Strategy

### Annual Review 2024-25

#### 1. Core Training - May 2024-February 2025

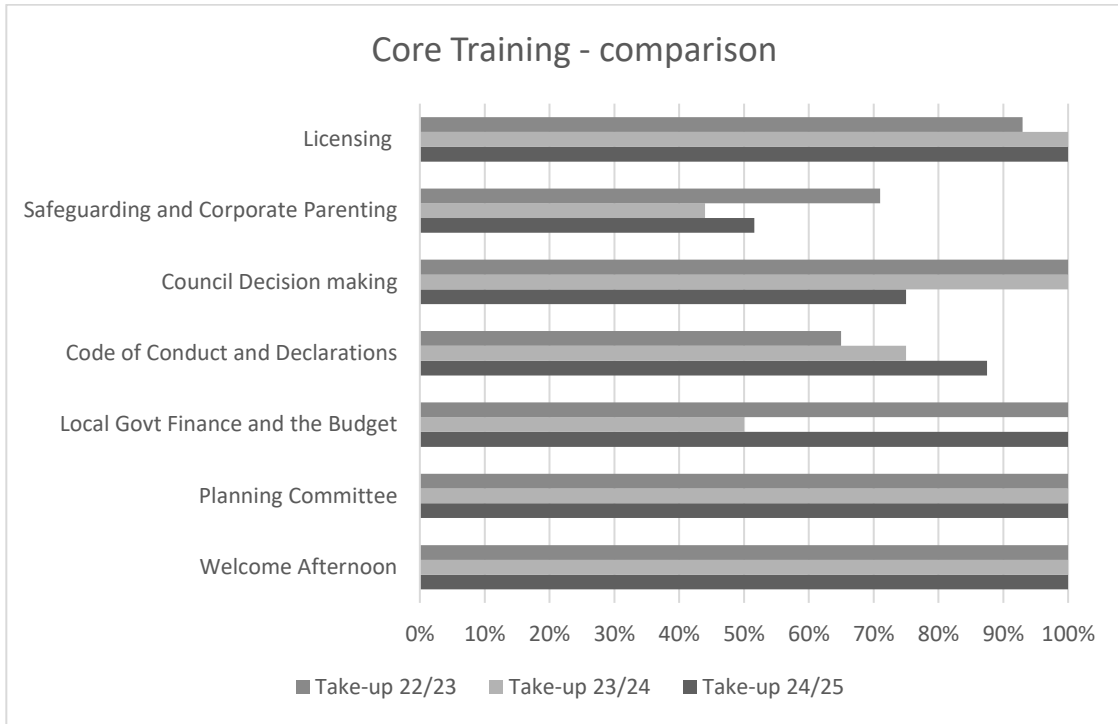
- 1.1. There is a requirement agreed as part of the Members Training and Development Strategy, that there is a core programme of training that is offered to Members.
- 1.2. Members who are elected or re-elected in May are required to attend these sessions. Newly elected Member have an additional induction 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.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Chart 1 shows the take up compared to required attendance for this year. There is good take up of committee related training. Due to changes to the on-line learning system, this year’s data does not include the core training which is accessed on-line, as Members have not been able to access the courses. This covers Fire Safety, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Equality and Diversity). There has been good take up of committee related training. However, of particular note is the low take-up of safeguarding/corporate parenting and there are still some Members who have not completed the Code of Conduct training. This session has been offered twice this year.

Chart 1



1.5. Overall attendance at Core training has improved since 2022. This is shown in Chart 2 below.

Chart 2

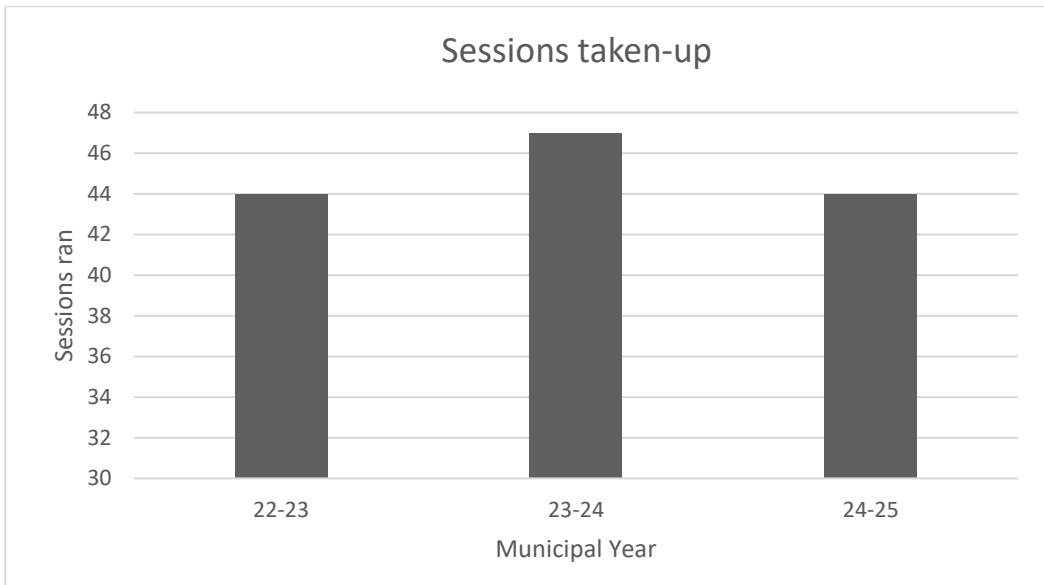


1.6. The exception to this is Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting and it recommended that work is done to emphasise the importance of their role as corporate parents to Members, as part of the training programme for 2025-26.

## 2. Overall Training Attendance

2.1. In total 44 training sessions have been taken up this year compared to 47 last year and 44 the year before. However, this years' figure do not include the 4 on-line training courses accessed 22-23 and 23-24, which Members were unable to access for a large proportion of the year 24-25.

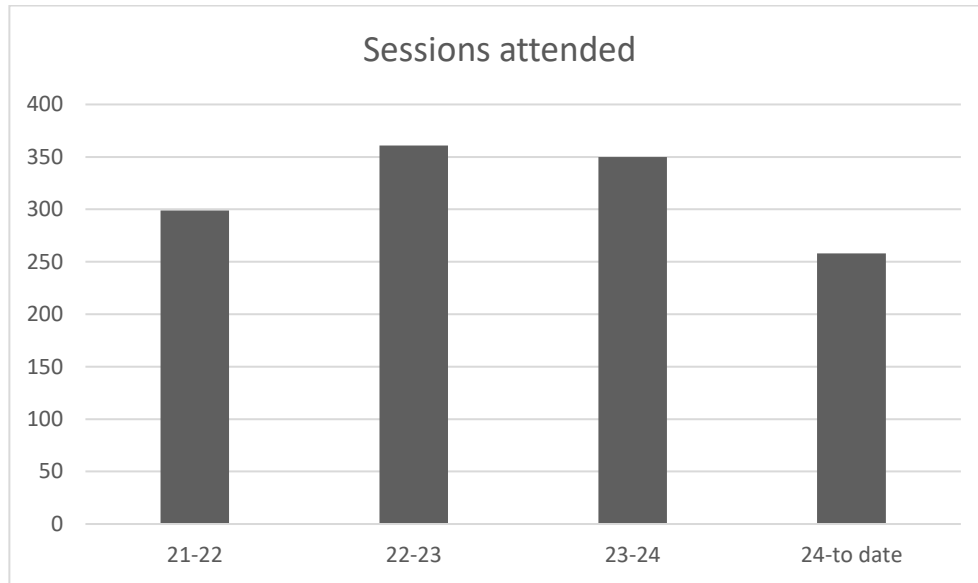
Chart 3





2.2. This has which has resulted in 258 attendances by 50 Members, taking the total of all attendances at all training sessions. This is down on last year and the year before as Chart 4 shows.

Chart 4



2.3. As shown on Chart 5 and 6, 43 Members have attended between 1 and 9 sessions so far this year, this compares to 44 last year and 41 the year before. This year there has been a general decrease in the number of Members attending a training session from last year, with an average of 4.7 session compared to 6.5 sessions last year and 5.7 the year before.

Chart 5

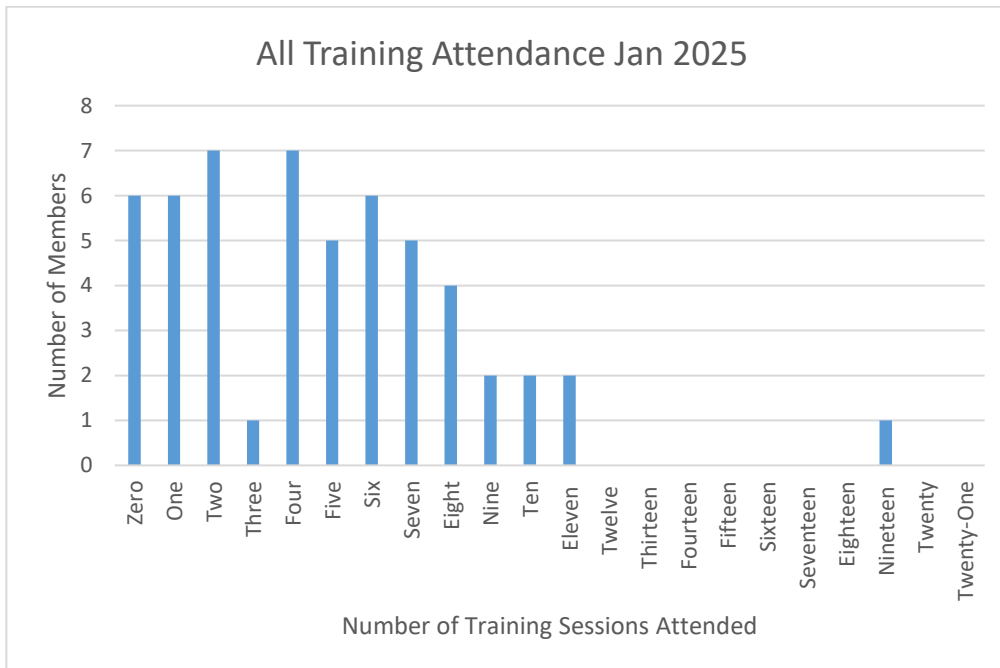
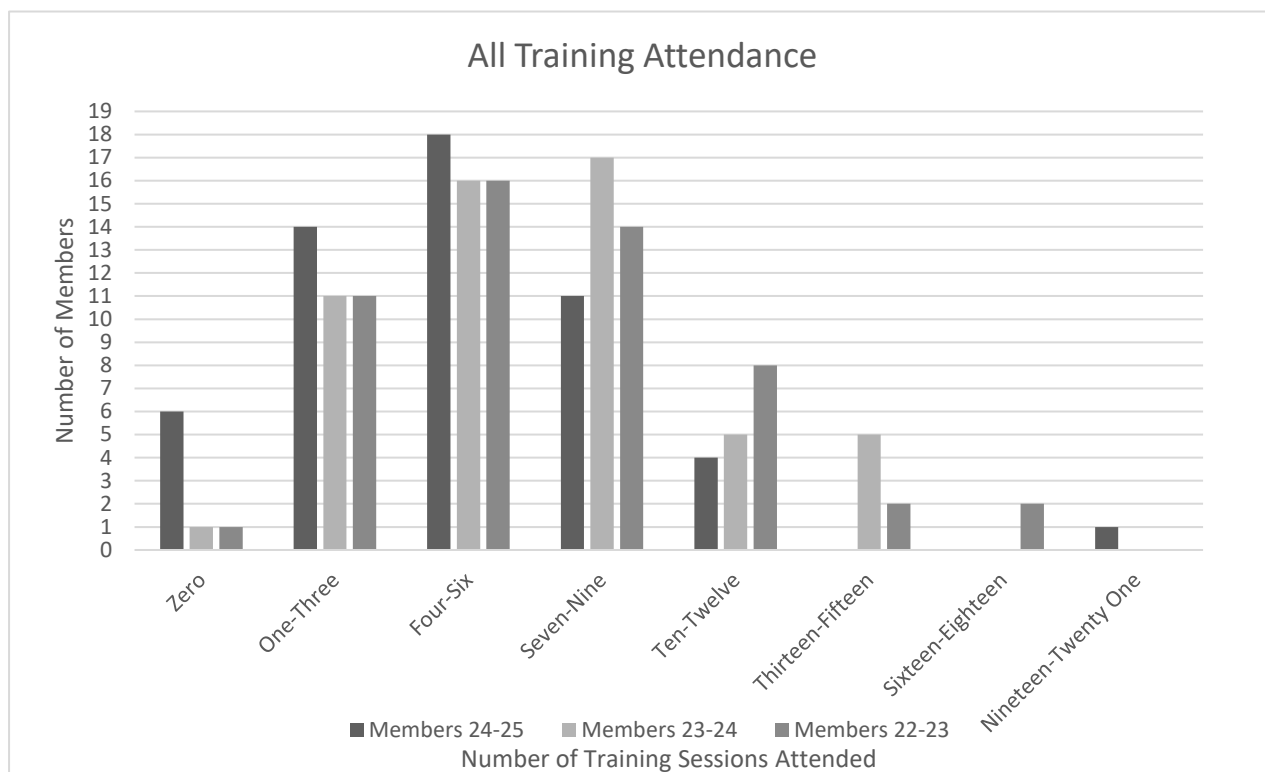


Chart 6



2.4. More details of the training provided to Members this year can be found in the Training Matrix in Section 7.

### 3. Training Delivery

3.1. The largest provider of training has been in-house using Council officers, covering 15 sessions of the training. This number is down on last year, mainly due to the reduction in All Members Seminars this year. The LGA have provided 11, external training providers 6 sessions, as well as 4 by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and 4 by the LGiU. Ensuring a good mix of training providers make for a varied and more interesting programme offered to Members. However this has to be balanced against the cost of external providers compared to in-house delivery.

3.2. Training is delivered via a combination of e-learning, on-line and face to face sessions, with 21 delivered via Teams or Zoom, 18 face to face sessions and 1 via e-learning (not including the core modules not available to Members this year).

3.3. In-house training is delivered at no costs and the majority of the LGA sessions are free, however there were 10 training sessions that did have a cost. The only core training session with a cost associated is for Licensing Committee.

3.4. There were 75 attendances that had a cost associated during 24-25. This is an increase on last year from 56.

### 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. The Members intranet page has been refreshed this year along with the rest of the Council's intranet. The information remains the same and is regularly refreshed to ensure information is as up to date as possible.

## 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 only been 2 All-Members seminars this year, which have covered:

- Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment
- Bus Franchising

5.2. This could account for the reduction in attendances this year, as All-Members seminars are an effective way of sharing knowledge with a large number of Members. To enable a more effective programme this needs to be scheduled from the start of the municipal year, as the Municipal calendar can get very busy.

## 6. Members Feedback – Key Highlights

6.1. Following one of the actions from the LGA Peer Challenge, a short survey was circulated to Members regarding training and barriers to accessing training. There were 42 responses to the survey which is a significantly improved response on previous surveys.

6.2. Training was positively received with an average score of 4.2 out of 5. 38 Members reported that email was their main source of information about training, the next highest was the Members bulletin with 11. Emails were also overwhelmingly the most preferred option to receiving the information, with 32 respondents identifying emails.

6.3. In terms of barriers to training, the main issue identified was time – with 11 responses for not having time to do the training, and 13 responses for the training is at the wrong time of day. However, the highest response was for “Nothing – I can access the training I want to” with 19 responses.

6.4. In previous surveys there has been a fairly even split between preference for on-line and face to face training. However, this survey, with a more significant sample size, has on-line training as a strong preference, with 21 stating that preference, as opposed to 10 reporting that more face-to-face training would address barriers to accessing training.

6.5. A key highlight was that “more evening training” was identified by 12 respondents as something that could help to address accessing training. As a result, two training sessions have been successfully held early evening. This something that will be continued next municipal year and will be monitored for effectiveness in increasing attendance.

6.6. Members were asked if there was any specific training that they would like to receive. Public speaking, which has already been arranged was mentioned by several respondents, as well as Charing and IT support. Members are able to access 1:1 digital skills support, so this will continue to be promoted to ensure all Members are able to access digital skills.

## 7. Training 2024/25 – Training Matrix

	Core Training	Role Specific Mandatory Training	Supplementary Training	One-off and additional training requests
Knowledge Based	New Members Induction Programme	Licensing	Scrutiny Work Programming	LGA – Leadership Essentials - Finance
	Code of Conduct and Declarations	Planning	Audit and Financial Scrutiny Board Training	LGA – Leadership Essential – Cultural Services
	Local Government Finance and Budget Setting	Planning Advisory Service – Making Defensible Decisions	All Scrutiny Financial Training	CfGS – Scrutiny of Council finances
	Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting		Air Quality Literacy	Coventry Safeguarding Children Board – Loan Sharks
			Bus Franchising – All Members Seminar	CfGS – Audit and Scrutiny Development Pilot
				LGA – Leadership Essentials – Leading Healthier Places
Skills Based			Casework Management tool	LGA – Getting to the heart of the matter
			Pre-election Personal Safety	LGA – time management
			Cabinet Member Media Training	LGA – BAME Weekender
			Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment – All Members Seminar	LGA – newly elected Councillors
			LGA – Handling Online Abuse and Harassment	LGiU – New Members
			Windows 11	LGiU – Chairing Skills
			West Midlands Police - Operation Ford – Personal Safety	LGiU – Questioning skills for Scrutiny
				LGiU – Social Media

## 8. Action Plan 2025-26

- Plan for new intake of 2026 all out elections.
- Highlight the importance of Corporate Parenting and councillors' roles and responsibilities.
- Schedule in dates for All-Members Seminars at the beginning of the year and agree a programme of sessions
- New training programme based on Member feedback.

Gennie Holmes  
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Ethics Committee  
2025

20 March

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A - Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Local Government Association (LGA) Ending Abuse in Public Life – Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit – Progress**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

The Ethics Committee has been monitoring the work of the Local Government Association (LGA) programme around Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship. This work is in response to the increasing concern about intimidation and toxicity of debate and the impact this has been having on democratic processes. Reports were previously considered by the Committee on 30 March 2023 and 28 September 2023.

In May 2024, the LGA designed a self-assessment tool kit designed to aid local Councils in tackling and mitigating the impact and risks of abuse and intimidation that Councillors may encounter as part of their role, supporting them to be safe. The initial self-assessment was considered by Ethics Committee at their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

This work remains part of the Committee's Work Programme, and this report provides an update on the self-assessment and action plan.

## **Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee are recommended to:

- 1) Note the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) on their Debate Not Hate campaign, including the self-assessment tool.
- 2) Note the progress on the Action Plan at Appendix 1.
- 3) Support the continued work to improve the support offered to Members to mitigate the impact and risk of abuse and intimidation.

## **List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 - LGA Self-Assessment Action Plan

## **Other useful background papers can be found at the following web addresses:**

- Local Government Association's publication: Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors, 3 July 2023:  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/debate-not-hate-ending-abuse-public-life-councillors>
- Local Government Association's publication Ending abuse in public life council self-assessment toolkit, 30 May 2024:  
[Ending abuse in public life council self-assessment toolkit | Local Government Association](#)

## **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: Local Government Association (LGA) Ending Abuse in Public Life – Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit – progress**

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

- 1.1 The Ethics Committee has requested that Civility in Public Life and Digital Citizenship remains part of the Committee’s work programme.

### **2 Work of the LGA**

- 2.1 In July 2023 the LGA issued a publication called “Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors” which outlines how Councils can better support Councillors to prevent and handle abuse. [Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors | Local Government Association](#) External consultants worked with Councils and relevant partners to inform the report, which includes principles for Councils to consider, top tips and good practice case studies. The key findings of this report were reported to Ethics Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **3 Ending Abuse in Public Life Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit**

- 3.1 Further to the Debate Not Hate report, a self-assessment toolkit has been developed by the LGA to support the work within Councils to address abuse of Councillors. The toolkit acknowledges the distinct roles and responsibilities held by Councillors, Councils and police in addressing instances of abuse and intimidation. It is crucial to acknowledge and understand the diverse spheres of influence within which each entity operates and that there are limitations in their ability to address certain issues alone. By understanding their unique sphere of influence and collaborating with other stakeholders, Councils can work towards meaningful solutions for many of these challenges. As such, this toolkit is designed to be realistic and flexible in its implementation.
- 3.2 The toolkit was developed by a specialist abuse and harm reduction consultancy organisation who worked closely with the LGA, a sounding group of Council officers and consulted with several national police colleagues.
- 3.3 The toolkit is structured around the five principles outlined in the “Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for Councillors” report, offering a practical approach to implementing these principles.
- 3.4 The five principles are as follows:
1. Creating supportive and informed spaces
  2. Creating a risk-led approach
  3. Creating an infrastructure
  4. Creating new connections
  5. Creating a culture of safety and respect
- 3.5 An initial assessment of the tool kit has been completed and a summary of which, and subsequent forward plan for Coventry was reported to Ethic Committee in September 2024. An Action Plan with progress can be found at Appendix 1.

- 3.6 The next step will be to establish a risk-assessment process for Members for home visits and surgeries.
- 3.7 Work already delivered which contributes to this work has been information provided on the Members intranet webpages in a section called “Well-being and your safety”, which sign-posts Members to where advice and support can be found. These webpages provide links to all of the LGA materials from the Debate Not Hate campaign, as well as support offered through the Council’s Occupational Health Service.
- 3.8 These webpages also provide a link to the “Personal safety guidance for elected members” document, as well as how to deal with online abuse and how to report harassment and intimidation.
- 3.9 Other actions already in progress are linking with the police on Operation Ford to identify a single point of contact, and a programme of personal safety workshops which have been delivered by the police for Councillors, as well as baseline work for Members risk-assessments when undertaking surgeries or home visits.
- 3.10 In addition to this a number of personal safety and awareness raising training sessions have been arranged for Councillors this municipal year, including one specifically on safety whilst election campaigning, and sessions delivered by the LGA on online abuse and harassment. 31 Councillors have accessed these safety training sessions.

#### **4 Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 Option 1: Do nothing
- 4.2 If the Council did not undertake the self-assessment process, there would be no understanding of the effectiveness of the work being done under the Debate Not Hate campaign and potentially put Members at risk from the effects of abuse and intimidation in public life. This is not recommended.
- 4.3 Option 2: Use the opportunity offered by the Ending Abuse in Public Life Council Self-assessment Tool to identify ways the Council can tackle and mitigate the impact and risks of abuse and intimidation councillors may encounter as part of their role and support them to be safe. This is the recommended option
- 4.4 The Ethics Committee are recommended to:
  - 1) Note the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) on their Debate Not Hate campaign, including the self-assessment tool.
  - 2) Note the progress on the Action Plan at Appendix 1.
  - 3) Support the continued work to improve the support offered to Members to mitigate the impact and risk of abuse and intimidation.

#### **5 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 5.1 There has been no consultation as there is no proposal to implement at this stage which would require a consultation.

#### **6 Timetable for implementing this decision**

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

## **7 Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance**

### **7.1 Financial implications**

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

### **7.2 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.

## **8 Other implications**

None

### **8.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan? ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan))**

Not applicable.

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

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

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

No direct impact at this stage.

### **8.4 Equalities / EIA**

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

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

None

### **8.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None at this stage.

**Report author: Gennie Holmes**

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Susanna Chilton	Director of People Services	People Services	3/3/25	4/3/25
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Julie Newman	Director of Law	Law and Governance	3/3/25	7/3/25
Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	3/3/25	4/3/25
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		10/03/25	10/03/25

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## Action Plan March 2025

Action	Timescale	Progress/Timescales	Status
1) Potential 1-1 opportunities and safe spaces for Members, including the stress risk assessment	Review in 2026-27 municipal year	Discussion has taken place regarding other “safe spaces” being provided for staff. Early in the pilot phases – consider the outcome of the pilot before progressing further.	Early progress – deferred
2) Promote rather than signpost to services such as Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme	To be available for all Members elected in May 2026	This will be the last part of the process, once all information and support is appropriate and available to Members.	
3) Provide training to support staff to identify signs (Mental Health 1st Aid)	May 2026		
4) Use the self-assessment as a benchmarking and evaluation tool and support ways for Members to feedback	May 2025	On going monitoring of progress by Ethics committee	On going
		Creation of questionnaire for Members on personal safety issues – establishing a baseline on what is currently offered.	In progress
5) Develop a risk assessment tool for Members	May 2026	Assessment of existing risk assessment tools and appropriateness to adapt for Members	In progress
		Assess current risk assessment processes for Members	In progress
		Liaise with Health and Safety colleagues for information and advice	In progress
6) Access to PVP		The PVP process is being reviewed. Members will be included as part of the reviewed process.	In progress
7) Involvement of partners and colleagues in the existing process	May 2025	Close work with the Police named officers though Operation Ford – delivery of three personal safety sessions for Members (19 attendees)	In progress
		Information about Operation Ford and weblinks for further information included	Complete
8) Establish a protocol with the link police officer for Operation Ford for reporting issues related to abuse	May 2025	Regional liaison with Operation Ford named officers and Monitoring Officers re: Single Point of Contact	In progress
9) Identify a methodology for evaluation of the action plan	2026-27 municipal year		

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## Public Report Ethics Committee

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Ethics Committee

20 March 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A - Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title: Six Monthly Review of Members' 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 2024 to 31 December 2024. The Committee reviewed the gifts and hospitality register entries received from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 at its meeting on 26 September 2024. 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 2024 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 2024 to 31 December 2024.

**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 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. Appendix 1 contains copies of all declarations received from Members from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024.

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

- 2.1 The declarations received between 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 are at Appendix 1 of this report. There were 4 forms received from 3 elected Members.
- 2.2 There have been no requests by members of the public to view the register during this time
- 2.3 The Committee is recommended to consider the declarations made in the second six months of 2024 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 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**

Members are required to declare Gifts and Hospitality under section 4 of the Code 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 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):**

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Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		06//03/25	10/03/25

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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	06.09.24
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Invitation from Warwickshire County Cricket Club
Full details of what was received	Attendance at the T20 blast game Birmingham Bears v Gloucester.
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	Attendance in the Chair's Lounge is invitation only, but cost is estimated at around £300.
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:	11.09.24

Reviewed September 2021

## 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.	Audit & Procurement Committee Chair
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Belgrade Theatre
Full details of what was received	Performance play on 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£36.00 for 2 guests - Complimentary tickets for Cllr and guest
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Role as Councillor and Chair of Audit and Procurement Committee
Signature of member:  Date:	  11 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

Reviewed September 2021

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

Name of Elected Member	Councillor Maya Ali
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Chair of Scrutiny Board 4
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	29 November 2024
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Albany Theatre
Full details of what was received	Alice in Wonderland Gala Night tickets x3
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£20 per ticket = total £60.00
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Chair of Scrutiny Board 4

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

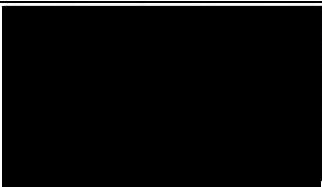
<p>Please outline the benefit to the City or City Council in acceptance of the gift or hospitality</p>	<p>Showing support for Albany Theatre and encouraging the art sector</p>
<p>Signature of member: Date:</p>	 02.12.24



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

Name of Elected Member	Ram P Lakha
Position held e.g. cabinet member, shadow cabinet member, elected member etc.	Chair of the Audit and procurement Committee
Date on which gift or hospitality was offered and received or accepted	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 – the show will be on 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
Person or organisation offering or providing the gift or hospitality and link to the Council if appropriate	Albany Theatre
Full details of what was received	Alice the Wonderland Gala tickets
Actual cost or estimated cost e.g. face value of tickets, price of set menu at venue etc.	£86 - 3Adults and 2 children
Justification for accepting the gift or hospitality	Complimentary tickets were offered, and it is accepted for that purpose

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

<p>Please outline the benefit to the City or City Council in acceptance of the gift or hospitality</p>	<p>Showing support for Albany Theatre and encouraging the art sector</p>
<p>Signature of member:  Date:</p>	 <p>09/12/2024</p>



## Public Report Ethics Committee

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Ethics Committee

20 March 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

N/A - Ethics Committee

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Law and 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 2024 to 31 December 2024 in addition to the entries which were omitted from the report (26 September 2024) covering 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1: Table of Gifts and Hospitality received by Officers from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024.

**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 Officers' 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 and 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 June 2016 and those changes were accepted by full Council in September 2016.

## **Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 1.3 The Directorates have been asked to provide details of gifts and hospitality received during the second six months of 2024 and the entries which were omitted from the report (26 September 2024) covering 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024. The position for each Directorate is set out in the Table in Appendix to this report.

## **2. Results of consultation undertaken**

Each Directorate was asked to provide details of their registers.

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

- 3.1 Not applicable

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

### **4.1 Financial implications**

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

### **4.2 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.

## **5. Other implications**

None

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

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

#### 5.4 Equalities / EIA

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

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

None

#### 5.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

#### Report author(s):

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<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
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Legal: Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	24/02/25	03/03/25
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		06/03/25	10/03/25

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**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Officer	Date	Description	G or H?	£	Provided by	Justification	Any conflict or future tender?	Approved by	Approved Date
<p><b><u>1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024</u></b>                      Omitted from previous report (September 2024) due to administrative error</p>									
<b>Officer Gifts and Hospitality</b>									
Chief Executive	11/01/24	West Midlands Local Authorities Chief Executives and Vice Chancellors dinner at PWC	H	£50	PWC / West Midlands Growth Company	Representing the Council as Chief Executive. Guest speaker gave his insights and analysis on national and international geopolitics, the economic environment and his predictions for 2024.	No	N/A	N/A
Chief Executive	07/03/24	Restitch - The Social Fabric Summit Dinner for Partners and Speakers - The Undercroft, St Mary's Guildhall	H	£75	Onward / Create Streets/ Labour Together	Representing the Council as Chief Executive. The Restitch summit held in Coventry brought together key thinkers, practitioners, local leaders and everyday citizens to discuss the biggest issues facing people, places and our	No	N/A	N/A

Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

						collective paths to prosperity.			
Chief Executive	20/03/24	West Midlands Tourism Awards, NEC	H	£150	West Midlands Growth Company	Representing the Council as Chief Executive. The West Midlands Tourism Awards form part of WMGC's overarching Global West Midlands programme, designed to strengthen the region's visitor economy by harnessing sustainable domestic tourism, growing the demand for inbound international tourism, and attracting more major business and sporting events.	No	N/A	N/A
Chief Executive	10/04/24	Sport Accord Birmingham and West Midlands Dinner, The Grand Hotel, Birmingham	H	£75	West Midlands Growth Company - sponsored by Commonwealth Sport	Representing the Council as Chief Executive, supporting the West Midlands hosting SportAccord 2024.	No	N/A	N/A

**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Chief Executive	21/04/24	FA Cup Semi Final - Coventry v Manchester United	H	The club advised: tickets in the Royal Box are given to the Club for free. There is no actual confirmed value attached to them as they cannot be purchased so no market value. As guidance, the FA have suggested using a value of £270 per ticket which represents the catering costs they incurred (per person) plus the value of a Category 1 ticket to attend the game.	Coventry City Football Club	Representing the Council as Chief Executive by supporting the City's football team and developing the Council's relationship with a key partner.	No	N/A	N/A
Planning Policy Manager	20/05/24	Ticket to the West Midlands RTPI Regional Planning Awards	H	£70 (early bird rate was £60)	Hyas Associates	It is good for Coventry City Council Planning to be represented at this event and to continue to be able to support the voluntary work of the region as it benefits all of our planners with their CPD. It is especially important that the public sector is able to be represented when resources are tight.	No	Planning Strategic Lead	21/05/24

**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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						Having discussed with managers.			
<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>G or H</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Business Reason</b>			
<b>Hospitality received at UKREiIF</b>									
Strategic Lead Property and Development	21/05/24	Pinsent Masons Roundtable event: Trends in housing-led public-private partnerships including the role of institutional investment	H	£80	Pinsent Masons	Invitation only dining roundtable event with invitees from across the public and private sectors, including investors, to discuss trends in housing-led public-private partnerships including the role of institutional investment.			
Chief Executive	21/05/24	Stoford Dinner	H	£80	Stoford	Private dinner and networking opportunity with invitees across the public and private sectors. Stoford have previously been active in Coventry. New opportunities in the city.			
Director of Property Services & Development	21/05/24	The Hill Group Dinner	H	£80	The Hill Group	Private dinner and networking opportunity. The Hill Group is the developer for City Centre South, a major development scheme in Coventry.			

**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Director of Regeneration & Economy	21/05/24	Arcadis Dinner	H	£55	Arcadis	Invitation only networking dinner for Arcadis' public sector and private sector contacts.
Chief Executive	22/05/24	WMCA Leaders Lunch	H	£80	WMCA	A private lunch with senior Local Authority and Combined Authority representatives looking to work with ambitious developers and investors who have a proven track record of success, hosted by WMCA and WMGC.
Strategic Lead Property and Development	22/05/24	Lambert Smith Hampton Lunch	H	£80	Lambert Smith Hampton	Private Lunch for a small group of property professionals and property developers.
Chief Executive	22/05/24	West Midlands Leaders Dinner	H	£55	WMGC sponsored by The Hill Group	Networking and dinner alongside senior Local Authority and Combined Authority representatives and key private sector partners.
Director of Regeneration & Economy	22/05/24	West Midlands Leaders Dinner	H	£55	WMGC sponsored by The Hill Group	Networking and dinner alongside senior Local Authority and Combined Authority representatives and key private sector partners.

Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

Officer	Date	Description	G or H?	£	Provided by	Justification	Any conflict or future tender?	Approved by	Officer
<b><u>1 July 2024 – 31 December 2024</u></b>									
Business Energy Advisor	11/09/24	£100 Next gift card	G	£100	Business owner	Offered but refused.	No	Senior Business Development Advisor	08/10/24
Senior Travel Safety Officer	21/09/24	Bunch of flowers	G	£20	Tiger Aspect Comedy Ltd (TV Production Company)	Officer arranged for costume department to borrow a School Crossing Patrol uniform for an extra in a TV show they were recording (after seeking appropriate permission from Comms team) Flowers sent as a gesture of thanks.	No	Principal Officer Street Lighting and Support Services	12/11/24
Chief Executive	22/10/24	LGA Fringe Dinner at Piccolino Restaurant, Harrogate	H	£50	Faerfield/Metro Dynamics	Representing the Council as Chief Executive. Fringe event as part of LGA Conference - dinner to discuss current issues facing local government.	No	N/A	N/A

**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Assessing Social Worker	24/10/24	Bubble bath, candle, chocolates and flowers	G	Less than £25	Family that Officer assessed as foster carers following the conclusion of the work.	Officer's final visit with the family (having assessed the family as foster carers and approved) before it was handed over to new worker.	No	Team Manager	29/10/24
Chief Executive	29/10/24	England Lionesses v South Africa Women's International Football at the CBS Arena	H	£175	CBS Arena	Representing the Council as Chief Executive by supporting the national Women's football team and developing the Council's relationship with a key partner.	No	N/A	N/A
Director of Finance and Resources	31/10/24 – 01/11/24	Dinner and overnight accommodation at CIPFA CFO LA residential retreat	H	Approx £150	CIPFA	Gathering of Leaders from different organisations with a view to sharing understanding and learning current and future issues relating to local government finance. This is helpful to inform short term and long term financial planning within the City Council.	No	Chief Executive	08/01/25

**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

2024-25

Transport Innovation Manager	05/11/24	Travel and accommodation for a presentation of project DRS at an event organised by EU partners in Greece.	H	Estimated value of travel and accommodation cost are £485. All funded by the project.	The Project	Presenting the developments Coventry are making in the Drone sector, delivering the introduction of Urban Air mobility. There are no personal gifts attached to the presentation.	No	Policy and Innovation Strategic Lead	06/11/24
Chief Executive	13/11/24	Women in Housing Leadership Dinner with guest speaker at Bank Restaurant, Birmingham	H	£50	Inside Housing / Ocean Media Group	Representing the Council as Chief Executive to discuss the current housing landscape, locally and nationally.	No	N/A	N/A
Head of Property Development, Disposal and Acquisitions	14/11/24	Prize of a hamper from Harvey Nichols	G	£100	Pi Property Insurance	Entered Property Conference attended for further training and information to help with role in Council.	No	Director of Property Services & Hospitality	11/12/24
Director of Finance and Resources	28/11/24 & 29/11/24	Dinner and overnight accommodation at SMT Autumn Conference at The Belfry	H	Approx £150	SMT	Professional organisation for the Local Authority Section 151 Officers which provide access to networks, analysis and information	No	Chief Executive	13/12/24



**Appendix 1: REGISTER OF OFFICER GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 1 JULY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Complex Womens Navigator	10/12/24	Tickets for football match on 14/12/2024. Football tickets to Coventry Football Club. Attending match to support service users attending.	H	Ticket to football match £37 + £1.50 booking fee.	Coventry Building Society	Attending match with service users who have also received donated match tickets as part of community settle and thrive project	No	Housing First Co-ordinator	11/12/24
Head of Public Realm	13/12/24	Invitation to CIHT luncheon	H	£75 per seat	John Sisk (Company)	CIHT are a national organisation for Highways and Transport. The luncheon is a function put on by them to celebrate the success of transport across 2024	No	Policy and Innovation Strategic Lead	06/11/24

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## Public Report Ethics Committee

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Ethics Committee

20 March 2025

**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**

The 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 matter 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, following consultation with the Chair of 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 Members' conduct.

### **1.2 The National Picture**

#### **1.2.1 Councillor S, Spelthorne Borough Council**

The Standards Sub-Committee for Spelthorne Borough Council have concluded that Councillor S had not complied with their sanction to apologise to an officer.

The apology was in relation to a Code of Conduct complaint against Councillor S whereby it was found that they breached the code concerning respect for employees. The apology was to be private and given in writing.

Despite the Councillor issuing a statement to the media confirming that they had apologised, the Sub-Committee determined that the Officer had not received an apology and that the reporting of this by the media was incorrect.

It was agreed by Councillors that an update on the proceedings would be published on the Local Authority's website and the press informed that the apology had not been offered.

Councillor S in responding to findings of the Sub-Committee stated, "I accepted the findings of the standards panel in line with their ruling, I duly submitted a written apology. "To the best of my knowledge a majority of members of the panel accepted my written apology and therefore I believed I had followed the panel's ruling and issued the apology that was required."

#### **1.2.2 Councillor F, Torridge District Council**

Following what was described as a 'tirade of abuse', with the "sole intent to cause needless anxiety and distress", Councillor F was given a custodial sentence for the harassment of Torridge District Council's Head of Legal Governance.

Having been charged with persistently making use of public communication network to cause annoyance/ inconvenience/ anxiety and harassment without

violence, Councillor F was found guilty of both charges in Exeter Magistrates Court. The Judge in sentencing noted that Councillor F denied the offence of harassment but accepted that they sent repeated emails calling the victim “corrupt and dishonest”.

Among the actions which amounted harassment were Councillor F, referring to the victim as a “disgrace to the human race” and “Hitler”. Although not the subject of the conviction or sentence, Councillor F is also alleged to have “bombarded” the Chief Executive with similar insulting emails over the course of the same period.

The Judge in their sentencing remarks stated that the victim “felt bullied and harassed and described the effect of your campaign of behaviour on her as horrific. She felt the need to be escorted in and out the building, had to install cameras at her home and even considered resigning from her job”. Further the Judge also stated that Councillor F was “persistent and sent messages on an almost daily basis for a period of 8 months, often with multiple messages in the same day. Those messages were derogatory, demeaning and unhinged.”

Councillor F was sentenced to an immediate 18-week custodial sentence, costs of £685, a victim surcharge in addition to being subjected a 4-year restraining order.

The Chief Executive in a statement, highlighted that Councillor F’s actions were dealt with internally in 2022, but the sanctions available were insufficient to stop the Councillor’s behaviour.

### **1.2.3 Lancashire County Councillor complaints made by Elected Members**

Of the 18 allegations raised against Members of Lancashire County Councillors, 6 of them came from other County Council Members and 1 coming from a Member of a District Council.

These complaints predominantly related to comments and remarks made on social media and in meetings that were offensive in nature.

All complaints were informally resolved with 4 found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct and 3 resulted in corrective action being taken or apologies issued.

The Head of Democratic Services said that the Local Authority tries to informally resolve matters where possible and went on to state that, “where there are disputes or debates between county councillors, if we can just get them in a room to speak to each other, we can often resolve lots of things.”

### **1.2.4 Councillor H, Bracknell Forest Council**

Bracknell Forest Council’s Councillor H has been found to have breached

the Local Authority's Code of Conduct following an investigation into a code of conduct complaint.

The Councillor was accused of swearing at officers and stating, "watch it or I'll kick your head in". Despite the language being described as "quite appalling and thoroughly disrespectful", Councillor H claimed the Officers did not take offence and the conversation was "banter" but that they were sorry.

As a result, the Councillor is set to receive behavioural training and must provide a written apology to the staff members. The matter was also referred to the Councillor's group where it could be considered whether 'any actions needs to be taken' in the future.

### **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** At the time this report was written, the Director of Law and Governance has received 2 complaints in total since those reported at the last meeting (9 January 2025). Both complaints are currently at Stage 1.
- 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 to 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 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**

Not applicable

**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.



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Shanita Manhertz	Trainee Solicitor	Law and Governance	24/02/25	24/02/25
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Legal: Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	24/02/25	03/02/25
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		06/02/25	10/03/25

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Ethics Committee

20 March, 2025

**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 2025/26

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report proposes areas of work for the Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed Work Programme and make any suggestions for additional or alternative reports.

**Recommendations:**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the proposed Work Programme for 2025/26 attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 - Proposed 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 2024/25**

### **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 proposed programme of work for the Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26, 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 proposed Work Programme takes account of the need to promote standards and addresses this in a number of ways. It is a draft Work Programme and 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. This includes continuing work on Civility in Public Life and the provision of training for Members.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to consider whether there are any other matters that they would want to consider during the year.

### **2.4 Recommendation**

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the proposed 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

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<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and Members)				
Director : Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	11/02/25	10/03/25
Finance: Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	11/02/25	11/02/25
Cllr S Nazir	Chair: Ethics Committee			

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## Appendix 1

### Proposed Work Programme for the Ethics Committee - Municipal Year 2025/26

<b>Ethics Committee Meeting and date</b>	<b>Topics</b>
<b>2024/5</b>	
<b>1. June, 2025</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Annual Report of the Committee
	Work Programme 2025/26
	Update on Members Training
	Local Code of Corporate Governance
<b>2. September 2025</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality - Inspection of Registers for first 6 months of 2025
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for first 6 months of 2025
	Work Programme 2025/26
<b>3. January, 2026</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report
	Work Programme 2025/26
<b>4. March 2026</b>	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update.
	Members Gifts and Hospitality - Declarations for last 6 months of 2025
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality - Inspection of Registers for last 6 months of 2025
	Work Programme 2026/27