
29th August 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:

Not applicable

Title:

Ethics Training for Members

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

At its meeting on 20th February 2014, the Ethics Committee considered a report on the Code of Conduct during the course of which it gave its views on ethical matters that should be covered by training for elected members. This report provides the Committee with an overview of the current training programme and suggestions as to how this may be modified to ensure the matters identified by the Committee are included.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

Consider the contents of the report and provide feedback on the development of a short training session for members on protocols and conventions at meetings of full Council.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix: Draft Training Slides for Council Conventions and Traditions

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: Ethics Training for Members

1. Context

1.1 At its last meeting on 20th February 2014 the Committee considered a report on the Code of Conduct. While considering this report, the Committee felt there were some areas where it would be beneficial for members to be offered training. The topics included:

- What is ethical behaviour in general terms? What does ethics look like in a local authority and what are the sanctions for breach of that behaviour?
- What is the correct protocol (including traditions) for Council Meetings?
- Social media - what are the pitfalls for Members?
- What is the relationship between the conduct of members in their public and private life and whether members' private life should be included within the Code of Conduct for Members?
- How do the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act impact on ethical behaviour?
- Guidance on gifts and hospitality

1.2 The Member Training Programme for 2014/15 already includes sessions dealing directly or indirectly with ethical standards such as "Code of Conduct, Standards and Ethics", "Working without Bias" and "Social Media". These courses already cover most of the topics identified by the Committee at its last meeting. There are, however, some areas which the Committee felt should also be included in the programme namely:

- Protocol for Council Meetings
- Impact of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act on ethical behaviour
- Guidance on gifts and hospitality

Each topic is dealt with in more detail in the Options Considered section below.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Protocol for Council Meetings

All councillors have access to a copy of the Council Procedure Rules at each meeting of full Council. However, new councillors in particular do not receive any explicit training on how full Council operates or on standards of expected behaviour at these meetings. Officers recommend that the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to develop a short session for members based around the Council Procedure Rules but also including any conventions in place regarding behaviour at full Council meetings. A draft set of slides is attached as an appendix to this report for members to consider.

2.2 Impact of Data Protection and Freedom of Information on Ethical Behaviour

In previous years, members have been offered training on data protection and freedom of information as part of the annual training programme. Officers have identified some areas where data protection rules in particular may have an impact on ethical behaviour and will look to adapt the standard training materials to include ethical standards. Issues that it is contemplated will be covered include:

- Principles upon which members' access to information is based
- Dangers of stepping outside the parameters of what is acceptable
- What could happen when it goes wrong?

2.3 *Guidance on Gifts and Hospitality*

Elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting, the Committee is considering proposed changes to the Members' Gifts and Hospitality form and draft guidance for members on accepting gifts and hospitality. Once these are approved, the Committee has been asked to authorise the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services to arrange for all members to be offered training on the topic.

- 2.4 The Committee is asked to consider the proposals for additional training for members on ethical matters and authorise the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services to develop a short training session for members to encompass the above topics.

2 Results of consultation undertaken

None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

- 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, the enhancement of training offered to members on ethical issues would assist the Council in discharging its duty to promote high standards of ethical conduct under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Other implications

None

- 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

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 additional training offered to members 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) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

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Directorate: Resources

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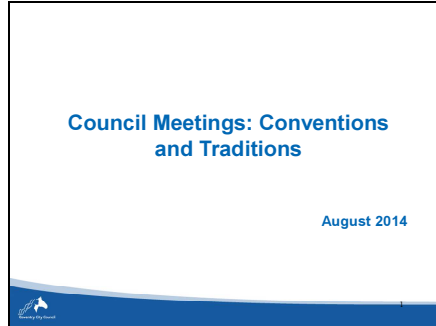
Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Gurdip Paddan	Governance Services Officer	Resources	20.8.14	20.08.14
Carol Bradford	Locum Legal Officer Place and Regulatory Team	Resources	18.8.14	18.4.14
Adrian West	Members and Elections Team Manager	Resources	19.8.14	20.8.14
Helen Lynch	Place and Regulatory Team Manager	Resources	18.8.14	18.8.14
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Carolyn Prince/ Melanie Thornton	Finance	Resources	20.8.14	
Legal: Christine Forde	Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services	Resources	19.08.14	19.08.14
Director: Christine Forde on behalf of Chris West	Executive Director	Resources	19.8.14	20.8.14

	Resources			
Members: Councillor Hetherton	Chair of Ethics Committee		20.8.14	

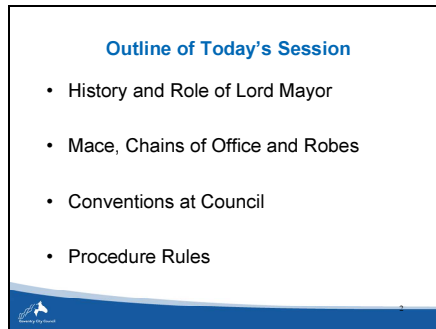
This report is published on the council's website:
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Draft Training Slides for Council Conventions and Traditions

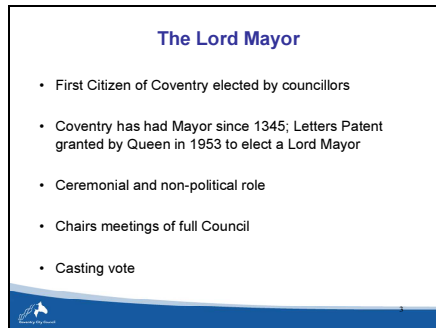
Slide 1



Slide 2




Slide 3



Slide 4

Mace, Chains of Office and Robes


- Mace: formal symbol of Lord Mayor's authority
- Carried into Council Chamber by Mace Bearer in front of Lord Mayor
- Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor wear chains of office when on official duty
- Robes worn on ceremonial occasions including full Council and services



Slide 5

Conventions at Council


- Entrance of Lord Mayor and Mace: all stand
- Silence when Lord Mayor stands or speaks
- Lord Mayor by convention casts casting vote in favour of largest political group
- Deputy Mayor chairs meeting when Lord Mayor absent or unable to chair
- Stand when Lord Mayor leaves



Slide 6

Types of Council Meeting

- Different types of Council Meeting
 - Annual Council
 - Ordinary Meetings
 - Extraordinary or Special meetings
- Duration of Meetings
- Quorum



Slide 7

Procedure at Council

- Lord Mayor decides order in which councillors will speak
- When speaking , councillors must stand and address the meeting through the Lord Mayor
- If not speaking, remain seated
- **Members' Conduct**
 - Improper, offensive behaviour or deliberately obstructing business
 - Powers of Lord Mayor

