

Ethics Committee

24th September 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Not applicable

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Review of Prospective Councillor Information Booklet and Candidates Briefing

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The Ethics Committee at its meeting on 8 January 2026 considered the Prospective Councillor Information Booklet which had been prepared by officers to assist prospective new Councillors who were considering standing in the May 2026 election to fully understanding the responsibilities and expectations of the role before standing for election. This follows concerns arising from elections held in other areas in 2025 where individuals were elected in other parts of the country without anticipating or understanding the demands of office, which caused them to resign after being elected or not being eligible to stand in the first place.

In addition, a candidate briefing session was held to explain the information contained in the Booklet.

The Ethics Committee requested that following the elections in 2026 there would be a review of the Booklet and briefing sessions held to ascertain the effectiveness of the information provided and to establish if there were any improvements that could be made.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report and the review of the Prospective Councillor Information Booklet and Candidates briefing, which were well received.
2. Endorse and welcome the continued use of the Booklet and briefing sessions at future elections.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Becoming a Councillor Booklet

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None.

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it 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:**Review of Prospective Councillor Information Booklet and Candidates Briefing****1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1. The Ethics Committee had previously highlighted the importance of ensuring that prospective new Councillors fully understood the responsibilities and expectations of the role before standing for election. This followed concerns arising from the elections held in 2025 where individuals were elected in other parts of the country without anticipating or understanding the demands of office. Which led to resignations and caused by elections and also in some cases the people had not been eligible to stand.
- 1.2. Officers produced a booklet 'Becoming a Councillor' which was available to prospective candidates in the May 2026 election (copy attached at Appendix 1). The approach taken was to ensure that it remained politically neutral and focused on what the role entails, what support is available and the election process. The information was also made available on the Council's website.
- 1.3. In addition, the Returning Officer held a prospective councillors briefing which covered the contents of the booklet, provided the opportunity for candidates to ask questions around becoming a Councillor, outlined expectations and duties of that role, the functions of local government and some basics around the election process. The briefing was well attended, generated a number of questions and was well received (see paragraph 3 below).
- 1.4. There were also candidate and agents briefings held as normal prior to the election which focus on the election timetable, completion of nominations, the count and campaigning.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. Option 1 – Continue to use of the prospective councillor booklet and briefing (**Recommended**). The use of the booklet and briefing will ensure that prospective candidates understand the role of Councillors and the expectations and duties associated with that responsibility.
- 2.2. Option 2 - Do nothing to prepare prospective candidates for the role of a Councillor (**Not recommended**) In view of the feedback received on the Booklet and briefing held in 2026, this would not be beneficial for future candidates in understanding the role of Councillors and the expectations and duties associated with that responsibility.
- 2.3. The recommended option is 1 to continue with the use of the Booklet and briefing for prospective Councillors.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. Following the election a survey was carried out with candidates and agents to which 46 responses were received, it does not distinguish if the person responding was a candidate or agent or if it was their first election. One of the questions asked was

“How useful was the information provided at the Prospective Councillor Event on 25 February?” 33 responses stated it was very useful or quite useful with 2 saying neither useful or not useful. There were 11 who did not attend.

- 3.2. In addition, a number of the newly elected Councillors were asked if they had a copy of the Booklet and attended the briefing. Those who have responded stated that they thought the Booklet was useful and so was the briefing and there was nothing they felt was needed to improve it at this time. One respondent stated that the booklet provided a relatively balanced and realistic view of what it can be like to be a Councillor.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Booklet is already available and is detailed on the Council website and a date has already been booked for a briefing in 2027.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities

- 5.1. Financial Implications

- 5.2. The financial implications, with the costs of continuing with the booklet and briefing, are limited to the costs of printing hard copies of the booklet which can be met from within existing budgets.

- 5.3. Legal Implications
No Legal Implications

6. Other implications

- 6.1. **How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?**

- 6.2. Providing the information enables residents to consider representing their local communities as local Councillors and understand what is expected of someone in this role. It contributes to the enabling priority of the Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader.

- 6.3. **How is risk being managed?**

No risks.

- 6.4. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

None.

- 6.5. **Equalities / EIA?**

No EIA has been done.

- 6.6. **Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

None.

6.7. Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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Councillor A Hopkins	Chair of Ethics Committee			01/09/26

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