



Council

21 February 2018

Item
7(iii)

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate	Author	Richard Clifford
Title	Mandatory Member Development – Consultation with Independent Remuneration Panel		☎ 507832
Wards affected	Not Applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Council has before it on the agenda for this meeting a recommendation from Cabinet on Mandatory Member Development that the following training be made mandatory:-
- Training on Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Data Protection for all Councillors;
 - Training in Chairing Skills for all Chairs newly elected to the Council's Committees and Panels from May 2018, unless they already have extensive experience of chairing meetings in a local authority environment.
- 1.2 Cabinet also agreed that the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel be sought on the principle of withholding payment of relevant allowances should relevant mandatory training not be undertaken. This report sets out the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel on this issue and invites Council to approve a change to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2.2 To amend the Members' Allowances Scheme by the inclusion of an additional paragraph as set out below:-

7. Mandatory Member Development - Withholding of Allowances

Where the Council specifies that training and development on a particular subject is mandatory for all Councillors or specified groups of Councillors, should that training and development not be undertaken the payment of the relevant Councillors allowances, including any Special Responsibility Allowance, shall be withheld until the Councillor has undertaken the required training and development.

Where, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, the withholding of the payment of the allowance is likely to cause financial hardship then this provision shall not apply.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 As part of the Review of Meetings and Ways of Working, the Governance and Audit Committee asked the Member Development Group to look at the issue of mandatory member development and report to Cabinet. Cabinet considered this recommendation at its meeting on 31 January 2018 and referred the recommendation to Council.

3.2 Alongside this, Cabinet also requested that the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel be sought on the issue of withholding payment of allowances where mandatory training was not undertaken. The Independent Remuneration Panel supported the proposal subject to a proviso to prevent it causing financial hardship.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 It is open to Council not to approve the changes to the Members Allowances Scheme.

5. Background Information

5.1 At its meeting on 31 January 2018, Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Member Development Group in respect of mandatory Member Development. It agreed with the recommendation and recommended to Council that the following training be made mandatory:-

- Training on Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Data Protection for all Councillors;
- Training in Chairing Skills for all Chairs newly elected to the Council's Committees and Panels from May 2018, unless they already have extensive experience of chairing meetings in a local authority environment.

5.2 Cabinet also agreed that the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel be sought on the principle of withholding payment of relevant allowances should relevant mandatory training not be undertaken. The views of the Independent Remuneration Panel on this issue were sought by e-mail and the following points were made and endorsed by all members of the Panel:-

- It was welcomed that safeguarding was recognised as imperative, in addition to the other issues;
- The proposal to withhold payment of allowances should the relevant mandatory training not be undertaken was supported, with the proviso that special exception be made if withholding the allowance would cause hardship. This would recognise the need to attract Councillors of all backgrounds.

5.3 Therefore, should Council approve the recommendation from Cabinet in respect of mandatory member training, it is suggested that it also approve a change to the Members Allowances Scheme to include a new paragraph as set out below:-

7. Mandatory Member Development - Withholding of Allowances

Where the Council specifies that training and development on a particular subject is mandatory for all Councillors or specified groups of Councillors, should that training and development not be undertaken in the prescribed timescale the payment of the relevant Councillors allowances shall be withheld until the Councillor has undertaken the required training and development. Where the training and development relates to a particular defined Special Responsibility Allowance, then payment of that Special Responsibility Allowance only shall be withheld. In all other circumstances then all allowances, including Special Responsibility Allowances, shall be withheld.

Where, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, the withholding of the payment of the allowance is likely to cause financial hardship then this provision shall not apply.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 There are no direct Strategic Plan references. However the provision of high quality member development indirectly helps support all the priorities in the Strategic Plan.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The training required to implement these proposals will be funded through the member development budget, where external training is required, or provided in-house through existing officer resource.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 8.1 An EQIA for the member development policy has been completed and can be found on the Council's website via the pathway Colchester Borough Council / Policies, Strategy and Performance/ Equality and Diversity/ Equality Impact Assessment/ Corporate Management. It can be accessed via the link below:-

[Councillor Development Policy EQIA](#)

- 8.2 The proposal in this report and the recommendations from Cabinet will increase Councillor awareness of issues relating to Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding.

9. Standard References

- 9.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations; or community safety; health and safety or risk management.