

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Member Development – Mandatory Training

26 January 2017

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider mandatory training for two issues; Safeguarding/Child Sexual Exploitation training for members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee, and finance training for all newly-elected Members.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee makes it mandatory for all Members and named substitutes of the Licensing Regulatory Committee to have undertaken Safeguarding/Child Sexual Exploitation training before sitting on the Committee.**
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary change to the terms of reference of the Licensing Regulatory Committee set out in Paragraph 3 of the report (below).**
- (3) That the Committee considers making it mandatory for all newly-elected Members to undertake finance training.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As Members will be aware, taxi licensing arrangements regionally have received a significant amount of negative press coverage recently, with poor procedures being highlighted at another district council in Lancashire.
- 1.2 In light of this, Internal Audit recently carried out an audit of the City Council's Taxi Licensing function, seeking to provide assurance that the Council's arrangements, procedures and processes in relation to taxi licensing are robust, efficient and effective.
- 1.3 The Internal Audit report highlighted a number of areas for improvement, one being additional training for Councillors on the Licensing Regulatory Committee. This report has been drafted in response to those findings.
- 1.4 The risk was identified by Internal Audit as:

“Failure to ensure the public travel safely, receive a good level of services from reputable drivers if Councillor roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and understood.”

1.5 The current risk exposure was assessed as Medium with “scope for improvement” in the opinion of internal audit.

1.6 It was therefore agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would put the recommendations in this report to Council Business Committee, regarding the need for Members to have undertaken Safeguarding/Child Sexual Exploitation training before sitting on the Licensing Regulatory Committee.

2.0 Mandatory Training – Safeguarding/Child Sexual Exploitation

2.1 Currently the Constitution sets out some mandatory training which Councillors must undertake before serving on certain committees. These are:

Equalities Training – for Licensing Regulatory; Licensing Act; Planning and Highways Regulatory; Personnel; Appeals Committees.

Licensing Law and Procedures – for Licensing Regulatory and Licensing Act Committees.

Planning Law and Procedures – for Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee.

HR Law and Procedures – for Personnel Committee.

2.2 The recommendation, arising from the internal audit, is to extend this to include mandatory training on Safeguarding/Child Sexual Exploitation for Councillors and substitutes for the Licensing Regulatory Committee.

3.0 Mandatory Training – Finance

3.1 Given that full Council is responsible for setting the budget, it is important that all members understand the budget framework, including

- the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects
- the setting of virement and carry forward limits for budgets
- contingency funds and other provisions and reserves
- council tax setting and other local taxation matters
- decisions relating to the Council’s treasury management activities including investments, borrowing limits and the control of capital expenditure;

and how all this is set out in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Management Framework.

3.2 These are complex matters and officers therefore recommend that it is made mandatory for all Councillors to attend a training session at the outset of their first four years in office.

4.0 The Constitution

4.1 The necessary changes, should recommendation (1) in this report be approved, would be to the composition of the committee in the terms of reference of the Licensing Regulatory Committee (Part 3, Section 3 of the Constitution). This currently says:

All members of the Committee and members attending as substitutes must:

- a) **have attended mandatory training on equalities and the relevant law and procedures which relate to the Committee's work**
- b) **undertake further mandatory training, on an ad hoc basis, when there are changes to procedure or relevant legislation that are deemed significant by the relevant Chief Officer.**

If the Committee approves recommendation (1) in this report, the Monitoring Officer would add the following wording:

- c) **have attended safeguarding/child sexual exploitation training.**

4.2 If the Committee decides to make finance training mandatory for all Councillors, Democratic Services will ensure that finance training is offered to all newly elected Councillors and advise them of the Committee's decision.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to approve the recommendation set out in this report to reduce the Council's exposure to risk regarding taxi licensing, and to consider making finance training mandatory for all newly elected Councillors.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Protecting the most vulnerable in our society is a thread that runs through all the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Community Safety: the action recommended in this report is to help reduce any risk to public safety when travelling by taxi.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the report. Costs of training will be met from the existing Member Development Budget. It may be possible to share costs with neighbouring authorities to reduce expenditure and Democratic Services would always seek to do this wherever possible.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS Such as HR, ICT and Property: None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has drafted this report in her role as Democratic Services Manager.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Contact Officer: Debbie Chambers

Telephone: 01524 582057

E-mail: dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk