

Report of the City Solicitor to the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee to be held on 28 June 2016.

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Subject:

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution.

Summary statement:

At the meeting of Council on 21 October 2014 Council resolved to provide additional training sessions on child sexual exploitation (CSE) for elected members.

This Report recommends an amendment to the Members' Code of Conduct to require such training to be compulsory.

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council on 21 October 2014 Council resolved to provide additional training sessions on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) for Elected Members.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 21 October 2014 Council considered a motion regarding Child Sexual Exploitation. The Council recognised the right of all children to be protected from all forms of exploitation, victimisation and abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation, and to receive help as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Council resolved that it is committed to doing all that it can to protect and promote the rights of the children, particularly those in the Council's care. The Council also resolved to seek to ensure that the Council's understanding of the issues and of how to respond to, investigate and prevent child sexual exploitation continue to improve so that effective action to stop CSE is taken.

- 2.2 An online training course has been developed in partnership with Just Whistle (the training arm of Safe and Sound an organisation which works to keep children and young people safe and sound from sexual exploitation), Parents against Child Exploitation and Bradford Safeguarding Children Board, to provide up-to-date information on: -

- The National Action Plan for Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Human trafficking.
- The grooming process
- Missing children and young people.
- Child exploitation and online protection.
- Arrangements for referring and responding to concerns in the Bradford district.

- 2.3 The training also provides an overview of relevant legislation.

- 2.4 The approximate length of time for completing the online training is between 1 and 2 hours.

- 2.5 Work is underway with Member Support Services to develop flexible approaches as to how the training is accessed and completed.

3 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- 3.1 It is recommended that all Elected Members and voting co-opted Members of the Council be required to complete a mandatory training course on CSE. It is proposed that the Members' Code of Conduct which forms part of the Council's Constitution stipulates that CSE training for Elected Members and voting co-opted Members is compulsory. To do so will act as a timely reminder for existing councillors to



undertake such training if they have not already done so and will of course ensure that all newly elected members also undertake the training. Elected Members will be required to repeat the training every three years, or earlier if the content of the training is significantly amended, for example as a result of changes to statutory guidance. By inserting a requirement in the Code the requirement will also ensure voting co-opted Members of the Council also undertake such training.

- 3.2 It is proposed that the following paragraph be inserted into the Members' Code of Conduct: -

Training

21A. It is a mandatory requirement that you complete a training course on Child Sexual Exploitation. You will be sent details by email of the course you are required to complete and the course must be completed within 3 months of you being sent such details. You will be required to repeat the training every three years, or earlier if the content of the training is significantly amended, for example as a result of changes to statutory guidance.

The Members' Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix 1 to this Report with the proposed amendment detailed in red.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The resources required to amend the Constitution can be met from existing provision.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

By undertaking such training, Elected Members and co-opted Members will:

- have an awareness of the background to child sexual exploitation, including definitions, the key legislation and guidance and research findings.
- understand the risk assessment process, including which elements are used to create thorough assessment documents.
- know the categories of risk and what vulnerability factors that professionals consider when undertaking an assessment.
- have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the key agencies involved in helping children that are being, or at risk of being, sexually exploited.
- be able to identify the key and up to date contacts/stakeholders within their ward for progressing safeguarding concerns and issues

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Article 17 of the Constitution requires the Monitoring Officer to take steps to make herself aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the Constitution and make recommendations for improvement.



- 6.2 The training will enable Elected Members to have a better understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation to assist them in ensuring the Council meets its legal obligations to protect children in the Bradford District from this type of harm.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The training will contribute to ensuring the human rights of children are protected.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Governance and Audit Committee consider the proposed amendment to the Members' Code of Conduct, which forms part of the Constitution, as set out in paragraph 3.2 above and at Appendix 1 attached to this Report, and consider whether such amendment should be recommended to Council for adoption and implementation.
- 9.2 That the City Solicitor reports any recommendation to Council and ensures any agreed amendments are implemented.
- 9.3 That the City Solicitor be granted delegated authority to make consequential amendments to the Constitution as a result of any recommendations approved by full Council.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposed Amendment to the Members' Code of Conduct.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

