

*Part of the remit of the Civic Affairs Committee is to provide assistance to district and parish councillors by ensuring that all councillors have access to training in all aspects of the member Code of Conduct, that this training is actively promoted, and that members are aware of the standards expected from local councillors under the Code.*

The district council and most parish councils have recently adopted new codes of conduct along with new procedures for administering a complaints system. Guidance has been issued via briefing notes, newsletters and individual advice. Given the potential for criminal sanctions if a councillor fails to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest in the correct way it is clear that this written guidance needs to be back-up by a training programme.

Training is important as a way to avoid complaints and to save the time and resources that need to be committed to investigations and hearings.

There are three areas of training the Committee needs to examine:

- 1) District Council Member Training
- 2) Parish Councillor training
- 3) Standards Committee Member Training

### **Training for District Councillors**

It would be cost effective to offer training for district councillors in conjunction with members of Huntingdonshire District Council which has adopted exactly the same code of conduct as South Cambridgeshire and to share the costs of an external trainer.

### **Training for Parish Councillors**

A number of years ago the Council's Legal Team ran workshop sessions in various locations across the district for parish councils in conjunction with CPALC which included a training session on the code of conduct in conjunction with a session on parish planning powers, how to deal with freedom of information act requests and parish council administrative issues. These were well attended and well received. It is proposed that we repeat these sessions for parish council chairmen and clerks this autumn and ensure they are well publicised in advance.

### **Training for Civic Affairs Committee on hearings**

It would be cost effective to offer training for committee members on hearings procedures in conjunction with other councils across Cambridgeshire and to share the costs of an external trainer.