



City of Westminster

Standards Committee

Date:	14 November 2019
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Independent Persons Training
Report of:	The Head of Committee and Governance Services
Wards Involved:	Not applicable
Financial Summary:	There are no financial implications
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the training recently provided to the Council's Independent Persons (IPs) on the 7th October regarding their role.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Following the appointment of two new Independent Persons by full Council on the 18th September, a training session was held on the 7th October for all three of the Council's Independent Persons to more fully understand their role and duties. The session also provided an opportunity for all of the IPs to meet one another.
- 3.2 The training session, which was conducted by the Monitoring Officer and a Principal Solicitor, included an overview of the Members Code of Conduct, the arrangements for investigating a complaint alleging a breach of the Members Code of Conduct, the available sanctions and the role of the Council's Standards Committee. The training also included details of the outcome of the review of Local Government Ethical Standards by the Committee on Standards in Public Life which was published on the 30th January 2019. This included the recommendations and best practice points including those relating to the role of Independent Persons.

3.3 The main queries raised and responded to during the training session are set out below:

- how the IPs would be contacted. This will be by Council email from the Monitoring Officer or on her behalf which is securely encrypted. Test emails were sent to the IPs during the session. The use of one-time passcodes was explained. The IPs have been requested to feed back any issues they experience.

- IPs enquired if the council provides a system for them to log into to receive emails or would these be sent to their personal email accounts? Generally, the latter are not considered secure. One IP said he had a form of secure email (criminal justice secure email) if necessary.

- The IPs commented that they were happy with the security process and noted that they would not be accessing emails via a council provided email system.

- IPs commented on the difficulty in accessing the webpage on the Council's website that relates to complaints against Councillors. This has subsequently been rectified.

3.4 The IPs were invited to the Members Code of Conduct training sessions held following the adoption of a revised Code by the full Council on the 18th September. All confirmed that they would attend one of the two sessions.

4. Other Implications

4.1 None.

**If you have any questions about this report, please contact
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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1972
BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**