

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON MANDATORY TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS ON THEIR ROLE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM FOR COUNCILLORS

Question 1: Should the determination of planning applications be the only specified function that elected members are prohibited from doing until training requirements have been completed?

Question 2: Should the training requirements vary for elected members depending on whether they participate in a planning committee, Full Council or Local Review Body?

It is not considered appropriate for the Standards Commission to provide responses to Questions 1, 2.

Question 3: Should the mandatory training be focused on the key principles and knowledge of the planning system?

Yes. It should also focus on the requirements outlined in Section 7 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, which set out what councillors should and should not do when dealing with planning applications, and what they should and should not do when dealing with policy and strategic issues under which individual applications may subsequently be decided. Section 7 of the Code also outlines what councillors should and should not do when they are approached by individuals or groups who are seeking to make representations for or against an application.

Question 4: Do you agree with the list of topics to cover?

Yes. These cover the requirements outlined in Section 7 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Question 5: Are there any other topics that you think should be covered in the mandatory training?

No.

Question 6: Which would be your preferred option for how the training could be delivered?

Question 7: Do you have any further comments on how the training could be delivered?

No response, other than to note that the Standards Commission would be happy to provide content and/ or assist with the delivery of the conduct and behaviour aspects of the training.

Question 8: Should there be a requirement for elected members to have passed a test before being allowed to undertake a planning decision

It is not considered appropriate for the Standards Commission to provide responses to Question 8.

Question 9: How often should elected members be required to retake the training?

At least once every election cycle, with the refresher training readily available.

Question 10: Should elected member's completion of the training be made available to the public?

Question 11: If the completion of training is made public, do you think the information being provided within PPF / statutory annual reports and on the Local Authorities website are sufficient?

Yes, completion status of the training by individual elected members should be made available to the public, to ensure transparency and maintain / improve public trust in the planning system. Making this information publicly available is through individual Local Authorities' websites and recorded within the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Reports / statutory annual reports is considered sufficient.

Question 12: Do you have any comments / suggestions on the best ways to monitor the long term effects of the mandatory training of elected members?

No.

Question 13: Do you have any comments on the impact assessments undertaken as part of the consultation on mandatory training on planning for elected members?

No.