**Report No.** **02/12**

 Standards Committee

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

**SUBJECT: NEW MEMBER TRAINING ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Local Government elections took place on 3rd May 2012. Following on from these elections, there was significant change to the membership of the Authority with a total of seven new members. The National Park Authority met for the first time following Local Government elections on 13th June 2012. It was unfortunately not possible to arrange specific training for new Members by that date but a training session was however arranged as part of the Members Induction on 13th June 2012 when a total number of seven new members attended that session. This training consisted of a talk on the changes to the concepts of “predetermination” and Section 25 of the Localism Act 2012 together with the rules relating to personal and prejudicial interests.

A further training session was held following the Development Management Committee on 24th October 2012 and this was attended by 13members. This related to the latest Guidance from the public Service Ombudsman for Wales issued in September 2012 following the decision in the High Court case of *Calver –v- The Adjudication Panel for Wales.*

Training in relation to planning and development control matters is provided to members by officers of the planning team. At the date of this report a total of 7 new members have received training on planning.

The question has been asked as to what role new members should be allowed to take in the Development Management Committee prior to undertaking training. Whilst the Authority has in the past encouraged members not to take an active part in the Development Management committee but rather to observe the process and gain a better understanding of proceedings this has not been a rule and is not set out in Standing Orders. With a total of seven new members imposing such a constraint may have been seen by some as unreasonable. It is perhaps of more relevance to new members appointed by Welsh Government or new members who are either new to Local Government or who have had no previous involvement in the planning process at their respective Local Authorities.

Part of my remit as Monitoring Officer is of course to provide suitable advice at National Park Authority and Development Management Committee and during the first few meetings I have had a more pro-active approach than would normally be expected in order to ensure planning rules are adhered to. It may be an option for the Authority to consider amending Standing Orders to preclude such members from undertaking any role other than an observatory role prior to undertaking training and this is something that the Standards committee may wish to discuss and make a recommendation to the Authority.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**To note the Member training that has taken place.**

*(For further information, please contact John Parsons, Monitoring Officer)*