

Standards Committee Meeting	Agenda Item:
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Meeting Date	22 November 2012
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Training and Development
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Performance
SMT Lead	Mark Radford, Corporate Services Director
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Joanne Hammond, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open

Recommendation	1. To note the Annual Report on Member Development.
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This is the third annual report to the Standards Committee, submitted in accordance with the Member Training and Development Strategy. The report provides an update on progress with Member Training and Development since November 2011.

2 Background

2.1 Member Training and Development

2.1.1 The Council's cross-party Member Development Working Group (MDWG) monitors the Council's Member Training and Development Programme. The Working Group is supported by the Democratic Services Team and the Corporate Services Director. All Members are encouraged to feedback through their Councillor representative on the Working Group.

2.1.2 Since the last annual report the Member Development Working Group's work programme has included: monitoring the 2011/12 training programme and developing the 2012/13 training programme; review of charter progress; refresh of Councillor role profiles; involvement in the Championing Communities Project; providing feedback on Corporate Plan and Ward Profiles; evaluating recent training sessions; and the development of a member training intranet site.

2.2 South East Charter for Elected Member Development

- 2.2.1 The Council was awarded the South East Charter for Elected Member Development in October 2010. To demonstrate an on-going commitment to the charter standard, the Council were required to undertake a mid-point review in April 2012. The Member Development Working Group and Officers produced a written submission outlining how the Council continues to maintain and progress the charter objectives. The Corporate Services Director, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer were also interviewed by the Director of South East Employers.
- 2.2.2 Following this review South East Employers commended the Council on their on-going commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter and considered that good progress was being made. They made two specific recommendations regarding monitoring the level of attendance at Member Briefings; and the need to ensure that training sessions recognised that Councillors had different learning preferences and needs.
- 2.2.3 The Member Development Working Group will continue to work with Officers to monitor progress on the Charter and address the recommendations in readiness for a full re-assessment in October 2013.

2.3 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

- 2.3.1 A Member training programme is developed at the start of each civic year. The programme lists suggestions for training/briefings received from Councillors, the MDWG and Officers. Each session is given a priority rating (1-3) by the MDWG as this helps to plan the timings of the sessions throughout the year. The MDWG regularly review the training programme to ensure it is deliverable and within budget.
- 2.3.2 Alongside the single-issue training sessions, a programme of regular training sessions has been implemented by the Planning Department since 2010 and the Internal Audit Team is also developing a training programme for Audit Committee Members. Members of the Licensing Committee are required to have attended a training session before they can sit on the Committee. Members have also been reminded of their responsibilities regarding statutory training in areas such as Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding.
- 2.3.3 The tables below set out Councillor attendance at training and briefing sessions which have been arranged through the Democratic Services Team from November 2011 – October 2012.

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Boundary Commission Update	1 December 2011	20
Planning Training	13 December 2011	10
Policy Briefing	11 January 2012	10
Accelerated Reading Course	16 January 2012	7 (plus 3 Officers)
Respecting Difference Workshop	19 January 2012	7 (plus Officers)
Planning Training	9 February 2012	19 (plus 36 Parish Councillors)
Revenue and Benefits- welfare reform	29 February 2012	11
Council Values Session	20 March 2012	8
Diamond Jubilee and Torch Relay	28 March 2012	8
Planning Training	12 April 2012	19
Planning Training	10 May 2012	21 (plus 20 Parish Councillors)
Respecting Difference Workshop	29 May 2012	6 (plus Officers)
Planning Tour of Borough	22 September 2012	9
Constitution and Code of Conduct	27 September 2012	15
Finance Briefing	18 October 2012	11
Thames Estuary Briefing by Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB	25 October 2012	14
Mid Kent Improvement Partnership Workshop	30 October 2012	9

3 Proposal

3.1 The Standards Committee is asked to review and comment on the annual report.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 N/A

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 N/A

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Council is committed to becoming a high performing organisation, which is supported by members who understand and are equipped to deliver their roles.
Financial, Resource and Property	Provision of £8,000 is made within the budget for Member Training and Development for 2012/13.
Legal and Statutory	Local authorities are complicated organisations that are heavily regulated and must act lawfully when discharging their

	<p>functions. They can only act where there is a legal power or duty and decisions taken by them must comply with administrative law principles. Members are often required to take complex decisions or to follow prescribed procedures and they can be challenged by individuals or organisations who disagree with decisions taken.</p> <p>Knowledge of the relevant legal frameworks is vital to support them in their roles as community leaders, advocates and policy makers. It also protects the Council from the costs and bad publicity that is likely to result from legal challenges.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None specific to this report.
Risk Management & Health and Safety	None specific to this report.
Equality & Diversity	Each individual Member will have differing backgrounds, and a differing range of knowledge and experience that they bring to the role of Councillor. Members as Community Leaders have a role to help identify equality and diversity barriers that prevent the Council from building more cohesive communities.
Sustainability	None specific to this report.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None