

Standards Committee Meeting	
------------------------------------	--

Meeting Date	11 November 2014
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Training and Development
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Performance
SMT Lead	Mark Radford, Corporate Services Director
Lead Officer	Joanne Hammond, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open

Recommendation	1. To note the Annual Report on Member Training and Development.
	2. That Councillors are reminded of their statutory duties and their responsibility to attend appropriate training in relation to these duties throughout their term of office.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The annual report is submitted to the Standards Committee in accordance with the Member Training and Development Strategy. The report provides an update on progress with Member Training and Development since November 2013, outlining actions taken by the Member Development Working Group to-date and their future work programme.

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 Senior Democratic Services Officer 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:

- Setting the 2014/15 Member Training Programme and monitoring progress;
- Monitoring the Councillor training budget and reviewing feedback from training sessions;
- Completing the Annual Review of the Member Training and Development Strategy;

- Receiving presentations from the Equalities Officer and the Community Services Officer on new projects related to Member Development;
- Designing three Member Development newsletters to keep all Councillors informed of progress;
- Meeting with the Learning and Development Officer to discuss opportunities to share training across the Mid-Kent HR Partnership;
- Producing the annual Evaluation of Member Training and Development Report for 2013/14.

2.2 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

2.2.1 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) 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.

2.2.4 The table below sets out Councillor attendance at training and briefing sessions which have been arranged through the Democratic Services Team from November 2013 – October 2014.

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Welfare Reform Update	7 November 2013	13
WW1 Commemoration Events and Sittingbourne Market	14 November 2013	15
Kent Police Briefing	28 November 2013	11
Switching Hats (1) – training for new and prospective Cabinet Members	2 December 2013	6
Planning Training – Gypsy and Travellers	12 December 2013	43 (16 Borough Cllrs and 27 Parish Cllrs)
Switching Hats (2) – training for new and prospective Cabinet Members	16 December 2013	6
Planning Training – Heritage and Conservation	6 February 2014	18 (16 Borough Cllrs and 2 Parish Cllrs)
Planning Training (annual training)	15 May 2014	19
Licensing and Gambling Act Training	27 August 2014	13 Cllrs and 2 Officers
ASB, Crime and Policing Act	11 September 2014	8
Peel Ports Briefing	2 October 2014	13
Welfare Reform Update	23 October 2014	12

2.3 Future Work

2.3.1 The Council has all-out Borough Elections in May 2015 and the MDWG's main focus over the coming months will be preparation for the post-election induction

programme. A “Becoming a Councillor Guide: Information for Prospective Candidates” has been produced, which is an up-dated and enhanced version of previous guides. Work will now be undertaken on producing an Induction Guide for new and re-elected Members and agreeing a programme of induction events and training sessions.

2.3.2 The MDWG are keen to increase the number and variety of learning opportunities available to Members, and following a meeting with the Learning and Development Officer, Swale will be sharing training dates with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.

2.3.3 The Council has recently procured a new Committee Administration System which will enable the Council to develop a member training intranet site and explore ways of accessing training on-line, at times more convenient to Members. This is a project which we hope to start post-elections next year.

3 Proposal

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

3.2 The Member Development Working Group is keen to reinforce the need for Members to understand their statutory responsibilities; such as Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding. These sessions will be covered within the Induction Programme following the Borough elections in May. It is recognised that some Members may receive relevant training through their paid or voluntary work, or their involvement in other organisations. However attendance figures at sessions related to statutory duties are often lower than average and the report therefore seeks the Standards Committee’s support and the support of Group Leaders in promoting the importance of these sessions to Councillors.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 N/A

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The report is submitted by officers on behalf of the Member Development Working Group, who have approved the content and recommendations.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Council's Corporate Plan has three priorities: Embracing Localism, Open for Business and Healthy Environment. Members need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to help deliver these priorities and to effectively represent their ward constituents.

Financial, Resource and Property	Provision of £8,000 is made within the budget for Member Training and Development for 2014/15.
Legal and Statutory	<p>Local authorities are complicated organisations that are heavily regulated and must act lawfully when discharging their 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> <p>Members of the Planning and Licensing Committees sit in a quasi-judicial capacity and training is therefore a mandatory requirement. All Members should be fully aware of their statutory duties and the requirement to have sufficient knowledge on these matters to properly exercise their responsibilities in-line with legislation.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None specific to this report.
Sustainability	None specific to this report.
Health and Wellbeing	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.

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Papers

8.1 None