

<b>Standards Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	16 January 2020
<b>Report Title</b>	Annual Report on Member Training and Development 2018/19
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Leader
<b>SMT Lead</b>	David Clifford, Monitoring Officer
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jo Millard, Senior Democratic Services Officer
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Classification</b>	Open
<b>Recommendation</b>	1. To consider and note the Annual Report on Member Training and Development 2018/19

## **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 2018, 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 and develops the Council's Member Training and Development Programme. The Working Group is supported by the Senior Democratic Services Officer and usually the Chief Executive, and met regularly on the run-up to the local elections held in May 2019.

2.1.2 The MDWG has met once since the local elections held in May 2019, and is made up of a member from each political party on the Council, who is encouraged to seek views from their respective members and feedback to the working group. The Chairman of the MDWG for 2019/20 is Councillor Monique Bonney.

2.1.3 Since the last annual report the Member Development Working Group's work programme has included:

- Evaluating the training provided in 2018/2019
- Developing the Prospective Candidate event, including the 'Becoming a Councillor' document
- Developing the induction arrangements post 2 May 2019 elections including the Induction Day and Member Handbook
- Setting the 2019/20 Member Training Programme

- Continued discussions on training needs for newly-elected Members and re-elected Members
- Initial discussions to update the Member Training and Development Strategy and Role Profiles for Councillors.

## 2.2 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

2.2.1 A Member training programme is developed at the start of each civic year and reviewed during the year. Ideas of future training sessions are sought from Members and Officers, and Members of the Member Development Working Group agree relevant topics. The MDWG regularly review the training programme to ensure it is deliverable and within budget. It also strongly recommends that Members take up shadowing opportunities as a way to learn more about the services that the Council provides and more information about these opportunities will be made available to Members in the coming months. Given the number of new members elected in May, the training programme so far has focussed on equipping new members for their various roles such as membership of the planning and licensing committee, audit committee, and charring skills, as well as equality and diversity training which is being further developed.

2.2.4 The tables below set out Councillor attendance at training and briefing sessions which have been arranged through the Democratic Services Team from **November 2018 – November 2019**. Parish Councillors are invited to planning briefings. Members will note that there have been 16 briefings covering a variety of topics. In response to Members' feedback previously, sessions were held at varying times on various days of the week

<b>Title of Training/Briefing session</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of Councillors in attendance</b>
White Ribbon/Anti-Social Behaviour reporting and Safeguarding refresh	22.11.18	10
Air Quality and Planning	3.12.18	14
Visitor Economy Strategy	12.03.19	11
Car Parking SPD	21.02.19	16
Visitor Economy Framework	12.3.19	11
Transport Modelling and New Settlement	14.3.19	15

Post election training:		
Compulsory Planning (Part 1)	9.5.19	32
Compulsory Planning (Part 2)	16.5.19	36
Compulsory Licensing	29.5.19	21
Planning Enforcement	18.6.19	22 (inc. Parish

		Councillors)
Chairing Skills	22.7.19	16
Audit	17.9.19	11
Equality & Diversity (2pm and 6.30pm)	23.9.19	19
Equality & Diversity (2pm and 6.30pm)	23.10.19	15
Social Media	15.10.19	9
Environmental Health – Food and Protection	21.11.19	6

In addition to the sessions above, 34 Members attended the Induction Day held in Swale House on 11 September 2019.

## 2.3 Future Work

2.3.1 Following the all-out Borough Elections in May 2019, the MDWG's main focus over the coming months will be implementing the post-election/development programme and reviewing the Role Profiles and re-drafting the Member Training and Development Strategy. Councillors will be reminded of their statutory duties and encouraged to attend appropriate training in relation to these duties through their term of office.

2.3.2 The MDWG are keen to increase the number and variety of learning opportunities available to Members, and will continue to share relevant training dates in the future with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Members will also continue to receive the opportunity to carry out to e-learning using the Elms Learning Programme.

## 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, Safeguarding and GDPR. These sessions will be covered within the training programme and information is also available on the Elms Learning programme. It is recognised that some Members may receive relevant training through their paid or voluntary work, or their involvement in other organisations. However past sessions have often shown that attendance figures at sessions related to statutory duties are often lower than average and the report therefore welcomes 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 on behalf of the Member Development Working Group, who have approved the content and recommendations.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Members need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to help deliver the Council's priorities and to effectively represent their ward constituents.
Financial, Resource and Property	Provision of £10,000 is made within the budget for Member Training and Development for 2019/20.
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. Specific equality and diversity training, which included unconscious bias, has been rolled out to members.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 None

## **8 Background Papers**

8.1 None