

Standards Committee Meeting

Meeting Date	10 November 2015
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Training and Development
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Performance
SMT Lead	Mark Radford, Corporate Services Director
Lead Officer	Jo Millard, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open

Recommendation	1. To note the Annual Report on Member Training and Development.
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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 2014, 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:

- Developing (and receiving feedback from) the prospective candidates event
- Developing (and receiving feedback on) the induction arrangements post 7 May 2015, including the induction pack and the event.
- Commencing the review of Role Profiles.
- Evaluating the training provided in 2014/15.

2.2 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

2.2.1 A Member training programme is developed at the start of each civic year. Following the induction, each Member has been asked to complete a questionnaire, feedback from which has been considered by the MDWG, together with suggestions for training from Officers and via the MDWG. 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.

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 2014 – October 2015**. Parish Councillors are invited to planning briefings.

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Respecting Difference	6 November 2014	6
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Briefing	12 November 2014	11
Planning Training – shared service and public access systems update	18 December 2014	14 plus 11 parish councillors
Planning Training (Section 106)	15 January 2015	10 plus 13 parish councillors
Planning Training (overview of appeal decisions)	5 March 2015	9 plus 5 parish councillors
MKIP briefing	23 March 2015	Estimate 7
Planning – housing supply	9 April 2015	18
Members' Induction	16 May 2015	19
Planning training	14 May 2015	10 plus 13 parish councillors
Audit Committee	28 May 2015	8
Licensing Training	4 June 2015	15
South East Employers Induction	10 June 2015	5
Safeguarding Training	16 July 2015	25
Planning Training – community infrastructure levy	27 July 2015	20

2.3 Future Work

2.3.1 Following the all-out Borough Elections in May 2015, and now a replacement Senior Democratic Services Officer is in post, the MDWG's main focus over the coming months will be implementing the post-election induction/development programme.

2.3.2 The MDWG are keen to increase the number and variety of learning opportunities available to Members, and will be sharing training dates in the future with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Two of our Members have attended training at Maidstone. As mentioned previously, it would also encourage Members to take up shadowing opportunities available.

2.3.3 The MDWG will continue to explore ways of accessing training on-line, at times more convenient to Members. This is a project which we hope to start when the intranet is available for Members to access outside of Swale House.

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 training 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 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 2015/16.
Legal and Statutory	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

	<p>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