

Standards Committee Meeting

Meeting Date	1 November 2016
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Training and Development
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Finance and 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.
-----------------------	--

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 2015, 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:

- Investigating and developing Members' access to information as an alternative to using the Intranet
- Setting the 2016/17 Member Training Programme
- Reviewing the Role Profiles
- Re-drafting the Member Training and Development Strategy
- Evaluating the training provided in 2015/16.

2.2 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

2.2.1 A Member training programme is developed at the start of each civic year. Ideas of future training sessions are sought from Members via a quarterly bulletin and Members of the Member Development Working Group agree relevant topics. Additional training and presentations are also put forward by Officers. 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. The Deputy Cabinet Members for Regeneration, and for Environment and Rural Affairs, both undertook shadowing with the Environment Wardens, an exercise they found to be very useful in increasing awareness of the service.

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 2015 – October 2016**. Parish Councillors are invited to planning briefings.

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Planning Enforcement Training	22 November 2015	44 (inc Parish Cllrs)
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Briefing	12 November 2015	26
Constitution	10 December 2015	21
Social Media	5 January 2016	26
Planning Training – Material Consideration	18 February 2016	40 (inc Parish Cllrs)
Revenue & Benefits update	24 March 2016	18
Effective Participation in Licensing	12 April 2016	11 (limited to those on Licensing Committee)
Planning and Building Control	14 April 2016	23 (inc Parish Cllrs)
MKIP and MKS Update	18 April 2016	14
Updates in Planning – Local Plan, Housing and Planning Bill, Planning Enforcement Database	12 May 2016	28
Compulsory Planning training	23 May 2016	27
Local Plan update	16 June 2016	39
Compulsory Licensing Training	18 July 2016	12
Safeguarding	28 July 2016	18
Planning and Housing Act	29 September 2016	22

2.3 Future Work

2.3.1 The main focus over the coming months will be developing Members' access to information using the Trello programme as an alternative to the Intranet and

finalising and implementing the Member Training and Development Strategy 2016 – 2019.

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. One of our Members recently attended training at Maidstone. As mentioned previously, it would also encourage Members to take up shadowing opportunities available.

2.3.3 The table below sets out Members briefing sessions planned for the municipal year May 2016 – April 2017. Other sessions may be added throughout the year, if required.

Dates	Training/Briefing
12 May 2016	Planning Update
28 Jul 2016	Safeguarding
29 Sept 2016	Planning & Housing Act
3 Nov 2016	Customer Services
17 Nov 2016	Transformation Project
24 Nov 2016	Risk Management
15 Dec 2016	NHS Swale CCG
16 Feb 2017	Counter Fraud & Corruption
13 Apr 2017	Police Update

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 and e-learning for Members is currently under discussion with the Learning and Development Manager. It is recognised that some Members may receive relevant training through their paid or voluntary work, or their involvement in other organisations, and Members own knowledge and experience should be used to assist other Members. 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: A Borough To Be Proud Of, A Community To Be Proud Of and A Council To Be Proud Of. 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 2016/17.
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