

Meeting Date	16th November 2010
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Development
Portfolio Holder	Executive Member for Performance and Total Place
SMT Lead	Mark Radford
Head of Service	Monica Blades-Chase
Lead Officer	Joanne Hammond
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 first annual report on Member Development being submitted to the Standards Committee, in accordance with the Member Training and Development Strategy approved by Council on 15 September 2010. This report gives an overview of progress in Member Training and Development since May 2009, focussing on attendance and outcomes.

2 Background

2.1 Member Training and Development

- 2.1.1 Swale has provided a comprehensive training programme for Councillors for many years but since 2008 Members and Officers have recognised the need to formalise the process. A cross-party Member Development Working Group (MDWG) was established with support from Democratic Services and the Corporate Services Director. Since May 2009 the MDWG have led on a training needs analysis session at full Council, implementing role profiles for Councillors and creating a Member Training and Development Strategy 2010-2013.
- 2.1.2 The Council has made significant progress in enhancing its training and development opportunities and ensuring equality of access for all Councillors. Some examples of the improvements include: a comprehensive member induction programme for 2010, an all-day Conference event for Councillors in June 2010, improved feedback forms, approval of an Evaluation Strategy and branding for the Member Development Working Group.

2.2 South East Charter for Elected Member Development

2.2.1 Swale Borough Council was awarded the South East Charter for Elected Member Development on 20 October 2010, by South East Employers. The Charter demonstrates that the Council has an excellent Member Training provision and is innovative in its approach to supporting Councillors' learning and development requirements. The full report from South East Employers will be available at the end of November 2010 and will set out areas of excellence as well as suggestions for improvement. Swale Borough Council is the fifth Council in Kent to receive the Charter accreditation.

2.3 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

2.3.1 Training and briefing sessions are open to all 47 Councillors to attend. It is recognised that not all Councillors will require every training session and information is passed on to Councillors unable to attend sessions due to other commitments. We have had a procedure since 2007 where we will cancel or postpone sessions, when we know in advance that less than ten Councillors have confirmed their attendance.

Councillor attendance at Training Sessions 2010/2011

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Member Induction	13th May 2010	11
Planning Training	20th May 2010	19
Milton Creek Landscape Briefing	3rd June 2010	13
Total Place Briefing	9th June 2010	12
Conference Event	12th June 2010	19
Planning Training Refresher	28th June 2010	9
Chairing Skills	30th June 2010	9 (plus 1 Cllr from Maidstone Council)
Constitution and Code of Conduct	8th July 2010	15
Planning Training Refresher	15th July 2010	15
Customer Profiling	2nd September 2010	15
Chairing Skills	8th September 2010	9 (plus 1 Cllr from Maidstone Council)
Media Training	23rd September 2010	12
Revenue and Benefits Briefing	21st October 2010	12
Core Strategy Spatial Options Briefing	27th October 2010	15
Licensing Training	27th October 2010	10

Councillor Attendance at Training Sessions 2009/2010

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
The Prevent Strategy: Kent Police	9th July 2009	12
Health Inequalities in Swale	3rd September 2009	17
Performance Management System	1st October 2009	11
Health and Safety	14th October 2009	38
Borough Planning Tour	17th October 2009	10
Overview and Scrutiny Conference	24th November 2009	8
Customer Services and Revenue and Benefits	10th December 2009	17
Licensing Training	19th January 2010	10
Budget	20th January 2010	22
Emergency Planning Awareness Training	11th February 2010	16
Swale Police - CDRP Briefing	11th March 2010	19
Covalent	7th April 2010	9

- 2.3.2 Members on the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee are required to attend training before they can sit on the Committee. The training lasts three years before it must be renewed but the majority of Members choose to attend the training sessions on an annual basis.
- 2.3.3 We are working with colleagues at Maidstone Borough Council to share training sessions where possible and will be exploring this further following the all-out Borough elections in 2011.
- 2.3.4 It will be important over the coming months to ensure that Councillors are kept up-to-date and are equipped to deal with changing legislation. The proposed Decentralisation and Localism Bill is expected to devolve greater powers to local Councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. Members should be aware of the implications for their communities and of the significance of their role as community leaders. We will therefore be working closely with the Head of Economy and Communities to provide briefings and relevant training sessions on localism and community empowerment.

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 2010/11.
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>
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. Member Training supports the corporate priority <i>SSC4Work with partners to build more cohesive communities celebrating diversity and tackling inequalities</i> by training to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues across all council functions.
Sustainability	None specific to this report.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

8.1 Member Training and Development Strategy 2010 - 2013.