

Standards Committee Meeting	Agenda Item: 7
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Meeting Date	15 November 2011
Report Title	Annual Report on Member Training and Development
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
SMT Lead	Mark Radford, Corporate Services Director
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Joanne Hammond, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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 second annual report on Member Training and 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 November 2010.

2 Background

2.1 Member Training and Development

- 2.1.1 The Council's cross-party Member Development Working Group (MDWG) continues to monitor and review the Council's Member Training and Development Programme. The Working Group is supported by the Democratic Services Team and the Corporate Services Director. All Members are encouraged to feedback through their Councillor representative on the Working Group.

2.2 South East Charter for Elected Member Development

- 2.2.1 At the time of writing the first annual report Swale Borough Council had just been notified that it had been awarded the South East Charter for Elected Member Development. We received the full report from South East Employers at the end of November 2010.
- 2.2.2 The following areas were highlighted by the assessors to be particular strengths: top political and managerial commitment; equality of access; innovative approaches e.g. Training Needs Analysis Workshop and Saturday development days; high profile Member Development Working Group, has its own priorities

and logo; use of Executive Members as mentors; and engaging with other partners including Maidstone around Overview and Scrutiny.

- 2.2.3 The assessors' suggested the following areas for the Council to work on over the next three years: develop clearer links between training and corporate priorities; develop the MDWG with budget accountability and evaluating the impact of training and development; identify who will lead the introduction of Personal Development Plans (PDP's) and explore possible options including working with Kent County Council for twin hatters; explore pooling of budgets and joint development and joint MDWG with neighbouring authorities; develop a response to 'Bold steps for Kent' and the Localism Agenda; hold 'Be a Councillor' event prior to May 2011 elections; consider Charter Plus; and identify learning styles, preferences and link them to HR/training and respond to them.
- 2.2.4 To ensure continued improvement the MDWG has developed an action plan for the next 12 months and they now receive a budget update and collated feedback from recent training sessions as standing items on their agenda. South East Employers will meet with the Council again after eighteen months (April 2012) to monitor progress against the Charter standard.

2.3 Member Training Sessions and Attendance

- 2.3.1 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) by the MDWG 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.
- 2.3.2 Members on the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee are required to attend training before they can sit on the Committee. In response to a recent peer assessment by the Planning Advisory Service, the Head of Planning has proposed a series of Planning Briefing Sessions for Members to be held bi-monthly on a range of key topics. Members of the Planning Committee will be expected to attend 60 per cent of sessions throughout the year and the MDWG will monitor attendance.
- 2.3.3 The tables below set out Councillor attendance at training and briefing sessions which have been arranged through the Democratic Services Team from November 2010 – October 2011.

Title of Training/Briefing session	Date	Number of Councillors in attendance
Planning Refresher session	4 November 2010	18
Localism Briefing	14 December 2010	16
Planning Refresher session	19 January 2011	14
Risk Management	20 January 2011	6 (plus 10 Cabinet Members)
Police Briefing	24 January 2011	23
Performance Management	10 February 2011	9
NHS - Health White Paper	30 March 2011	13
Member Induction	11 May 2011	7
Kent Police re-organisation	18 May 2011	11
Planning Training	19 May 2011	13
Sittingbourne Town Centre Bridge Application	23 May 2011	17
Constitution/Code of Conduct	2 June 2011	15
Planning Tour of Borough	11 June 2011	8
Licensing Training	24 June 2011	10
Vesta Wind Turbine Briefing	27 June 2011	15
Standards Hearing Briefing Session (for Committee Members)	6 July 2011	2 and one Independent Member
Boundary Commission	14 July 2011	34
Community Budgets (KCC)	26 July 2011	12
Chairing Skills	28 July 2011	12
NHS Briefing	1 September 2011	8
Planning (new National Planning Framework proposals)	28 September 2011	12
Planning (Kent Highway Services)	20 October 2011	15

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 2011/12.
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.