

## Standards Committee Meeting

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| <b>Meeting Date</b>     | 21 November 2018                                 |
| <b>Report Title</b>     | Annual Report on Member Training and Development |
| <b>Portfolio Holder</b> | Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance       |
| <b>SMT Lead</b>         | Mark Radford, Chief Executive                    |
| <b>Lead Officer</b>     | Jo Millard, Senior Democratic Services Officer   |
| <b>Key Decision</b>     | No   |
| <b>Classification</b>   | Open   |

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| <b>Recommendation</b> | 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 2017, 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 the Chief Executive. 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:

- Providing opportunities for Members to receive training in the Elms learning programme accessed by staff to carry out statutory training such as Health and Safety and Safeguarding
- Setting the 2018/19 Member Training Programme
- Evaluating the training provided in 2017/18
- Discussions on training needs for potential new Members and re-elected Members after the 2019 elections

## 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.

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 2017 – October 2018**. 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 now held mostly on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

| <b>Title of Training/Briefing session</b>           | <b>Date</b>          | <b>Number of Councillors in attendance</b> |
|---|----------------------|--|
| MKS   | 2 November 2017      | 12   |
| Universal Credit                                    | 23 November 2017     | 26   |
| Local Plan Workshop                                 | 11 December 2017     | 21   |
| Regeneration Projects in Sheppey and Faversham      | 9 January 2018       | 19   |
| Transformation Project                              | 13 March 2018        | 17   |
| GDPR Update   | 5 April 2018         | 13   |
| Police Briefing                                     | 17 April 2018        | 24   |
| Compulsory Planning Refresher                       | 21 May/23 May 2018   | 8  |
| Elms e-learning Training                            | 22 May/24 May 2018   | 7  |
| Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration Scheme       | 14 June 2018         | 16   |
| Compulsory Licensing Refresher                      | 20 June/17 July 2018 | 6  |
| Planning Enforcement                                | 26 July 2018         | 30 (inc Parish Council)                    |
| Housing Numbers, Land Supply and Delivery Test      | 18 September 2018    | 14   |
| Sports Facilities and the SERO Contract             | 4 October 2018       | 9  |
| New Garden Communities                              | 16 October 2018      | 24   |
| Housing Assistance Policy/Universal Credit/Stay Put | 18 October 2018      | 13   |

## 2.3 Future Work

2.3.1 The main focus over the coming months will be preparation for the post-election induction programme. The 'Becoming a Councillor Guide: Information for Prospective Candidates' will be updated as necessary and work will be undertaken on agreeing a programme of induction events and training sessions. The current

induction guide for new and re-elected Members will also be updated. 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 be sharing training dates in the future with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Members have already attended compulsory Licensing refresher training hosted by Maidstone Borough Council.

### **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, after May 2019, 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**

| <b>Issue</b>                     | <b>Implications</b>  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 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 2018/19.   |
| 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   |

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|                                     | <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