

Member Training and Development Strategy 2017 - 2020



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Member Training and Development Strategy (2017 – 2020) is to show the importance of training and development of Swale Borough Council's 47 Members, and to provide a training programme to encourage Members to make the most of opportunities in order that Members:

- Understand and be able to contribute to implementing the corporate priorities of Swale Borough Council and effective decision making;
- Become effective community leaders, meet the requirements of the role descriptions and be fully aware of the changing role of the Member;
- Understand new and revised Government legislation and Council policies and how they affect the Council and local residents;
- Take responsibility for their own learning and development and meet their own personal development needs as a Member, including succession planning;
- Meet mandatory and statutory training requirements e.g. planning, licensing, equality and diversity, health and safety, and safeguarding.

The Strategy also identifies roles and responsibilities, promotes equality of opportunity and outlines how processes and procedures will be implemented to ensure the best use of resources in identifying and meeting the training and development needs of Members.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Members

It is the role and responsibilities of individual Members to:

- Be responsible for their personal development and undertake appropriate training, development and briefing opportunities;
- Participate in all mandatory training and wherever possible in training that will enhance their work as a Councillor;
- Evaluate, feedback and share information from any training and development undertaken.
- Complete feedback forms.

2.2 Group Leaders

It is the role and responsibility of Group Leaders to ensure that:

- Member training and development is a regular item on the agenda of Group meetings – discussion to centre around feedback from the Member Development Working Group, identification of training and development needs, feedback and sharing information from training and development sessions;
- One-to-one discussions take place on an annual basis between each Group Leader and each Group Member – to discuss performance, training and development needs, training and development received and future aspirations and requirements;

- Training and development opportunities are communicated to all Members.

2.3 Cabinet Members

It is the role and responsibility of Cabinet Members to ensure that:

- There is a budget to meet the identified training and development needs for Members where external trainers/providers are required;
- Training and development is encouraged, with a particular emphasis for their own portfolio;
- They support Deputy Cabinet and ensure that they are provided with the information necessary to fulfil their role.

2.4 Terms of Reference

- (a) To develop and review an annual member led Training and Development Programme for Members, ensuring that all Members and Senior Officers are given the opportunity to input into the training plan.
- (b) To develop and review a comprehensive induction programme for new and re-elected Councillors at each all-out Borough Council elections or by-elections.
- (c) To encourage Members to take full advantage of the Member development and training opportunities available;
- (d) Each member of the Group to champion member training throughout their respective Groups.
- (e) The MDWG will have a role to play in encouraging Group Leaders to work with Members of their Groups to identify their training needs, ensuring this information is fed back to Democratic Services and encourage attendance at training sessions. This is essential to ensure that the programme is Member driven and meets Members' needs.
- (f) Review the Member training budget including how to prioritise needs and how the training links with the Council's corporate objectives.
- (g) To request feedback on training and development sessions, and to follow the protocols set out in the Evaluation Strategy to assess the effectiveness of training provided, and to use this feedback in the ongoing review of the training programme.
- (h) That the Member Development Working Group produces an annual report to the Standards Committee.
- (i) To assist in development of electronic access to training information and potentially e-learning modules used by internal staff.

2.5 Officers

The Member Development Working Group is supported by the Corporate Services Director, and Democratic Services, led by the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

It is also the responsibility of other officers, in particular the Chief Executive and Strategic Management Team, to work with the Members and in particular the MDWG to identify and meet the training and development needs of the Members. This will include liaison with the Council's Learning and Development Team.

3.0 MEETING THE IDENTIFIED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

3.1 Induction

The induction programme will be reviewed and updated by the MDWG in advance of all-out or by-elections. The review will consider feedback received from new Councillors, well established Councillors and Heads of Service and will refer to other Councils' programmes.

3.2 Member Training and Development Programme

The Member Training and Development Programme is agreed by the Member Development Working Group on an annual basis and includes:

- Briefings by senior officers;
- Workshops/courses/briefings led by external providers;
- Joint training arranged with other local Councils and partners;
- Mandatory training requirements;
- Mentoring;
- Briefing notes on key policies and strategic issues;
- Specialised member programmes provided by organisations e.g. Local Government Association (LGA), South East Employers (SEE);
- Conferences and seminars run by external organisations;
- Work shadowing.

If Members identify other opportunities which they feel they and the Council would benefit from they need to get agreement from their Group Leader then complete an individual training application form. This should be sent to Democratic Services who will arrange for it to be considered by the MDWG.

With regard to conference attendance, priority will be given to attendance at conferences for organisations to which one or more Councillors have been appointed to at the Annual Council Meeting. Examples of these organisations include: the Local Government Association and South East Employers, etc. Notice of the date and cost of the conference will be provided to the Leader and Cabinet Member PA and/or the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager by the relevant Member.

Any Member wishing to attend a conference should discuss with their Group Leader and approval is delegated to the Corporate Services Director in liaison with the Leader/Group Leader. Consideration will be given to the benefit of the Conference for the Member and the Council, and the remaining budget. Members are encouraged to feed back to other Members on the content and any learning gained from the conference and the benefits to the Council.

Expenses for attendance at training sessions will be paid as outlined in the Members' Allowances Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution).

4.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

An Evaluation Statement is attached as Appendix I.

4.1 Standards Committee

There will be an annual report on Member training and development to the Standards Committee outlining the Member training and development activities during the previous year, attendance figures, budget and an outline of future priorities for the Member Development Working Group.

5.0 ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The action plan will be used on a rolling basis and reviewed annually in line with the terms of reference. The action plan will form the basis of the Member Development Working Group work programme and will ensure that the Council remains committed to maintaining and improving the Member training provision for Councillors.



EVALUATION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Evaluation Statement is to ensure a consistent approach to the evaluation of Member Training and Briefing sessions.

The importance of evaluating training sessions:

1. To ensure that sessions meet their aims and objectives.
2. To assess whether the training fulfilled the learning and development needs of the Councillors.
3. To identify any further training needs as a result of the training session.
4. To identify any areas for improvement - e.g. timing, method of delivering training.

Councillors will:

- Advise Democratic Services in advance if they are able/unable to attend training or briefing sessions.
- Complete the feedback forms by the end of the training/briefing sessions.

Democratic Services will:

- Provide Councillors with as much notice as possible of training/briefing events.
- Log attendance at training sessions and provide evaluation reports to the appropriate meetings, in accordance with the Member Training and Development Strategy.
- Follow up on any further training needs identified, in accordance with the process set out in the Strategy.

The Member Development Working Group will:

- Monitor the evaluation feedback and provide recommendations for improving sessions.
- Ensure that the results of the evaluation reports are used when planning future training programmes.

Scrutiny and Governance:

- Annual reports on Member Training and Development will be submitted to the Standards Committee in accordance with the Strategy.