

Member Learning and Development Update

Final Decision-Maker	Democracy Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ryan O'Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on Member Learning and Development undertaken in 2018/19, and outlines plans for Learning and Development for 2019/20.

This report makes the following recommendations to Democracy Committee

That the Member Learning and Development Update be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy Committee	13 March 2019

Member Learning and Development Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 5 September 2018, the Democracy Committee resolved to agree the Maidstone Borough Council Learning and Development Charter. This charter set a framework so that the Council could assess progress against the aspirations within the charter. Over the year a wide variety of Learning and Development events have been undertaken, and feedback has been received on how to make improvements to Learning and Development in the new municipal year.

Learning and Development Activities Undertaken

- 1.2 There have been 30 member Learning and Development sessions that have occurred since the beginning of the municipal year. These sessions include member briefings as well as training sessions. Of these sessions, seven were training/induction sessions and 13 were member briefings. However some of the training sessions were repeated – for example there were 2 Planning training sessions and 3 Standards training sessions included in the total.
- 1.3 The three sessions with the highest attendance were all planning sessions – ‘Mandatory Planning Training’ (26 attendees), ‘The Development Process’ (21 attendees) and ‘Local Plan Review & CIL’ (20 attendees).
- 1.4 The three sessions that had the lowest attendance were ‘Standards Training’ (2 attendees), ‘Mandatory Licensing Training’ (2 attendees) and ‘Heather House Visit’ (4 Attendees).
- 1.5 In terms of member attendance, the members that attended the most L&D activities attended 20, 19 and 18 sessions. There were 8 members that had not attended any L&D sessions, and a further 9 that have only attended one L&D session this year.

Committee Structure Review

The Committee Structure Review made a number of recommendations and suggestions relating to Member Learning and Development:

- Roleplaying a Committee meeting so that functions and procedures were familiar
- A broad introduction to the functions, workings and governance at the Council
- A tour of the aspects of the Council that related to each Committee

- Public speaking training to improve upon confidence and the effectiveness of presentations and debates
- Training on the scheme of delegation and how delegation is exercised

1.6 These recommendations will be considered when devising the member induction procedures and learning and development plan for 2019/20.

Learning and Development in 2019/20

1.7 Following feedback from members about the frequency and accessibility of briefing sessions and learning and development events, some changes have been put in place for 2019/20.

1.8 The Calendar of meetings for 2019/20 was agreed at the Council meeting on 27 February 2019. The agreed Calendar of meetings now has two member briefing/training sessions per month programmed in to give sufficient notice to members and officers on when briefings will occur. It will also allow several shorter briefings to be combined, if there is a need, further reducing the time demand on briefings. This was made possible due to the reduction in frequency of Planning Committee meetings to a monthly cycle.

1.9 From 2019/20, in order to prevent clashes of briefings or overlap of topics, all member briefing sessions will come through Democratic Services.

1.10 The new webcasting system is due to go live in time for the new municipal year. This new system will use YouTube and will allow a private link to be sent to members so that those who cannot attend briefings will be able to watch live – with the possibility of interacting using the comments feature – and also to watch a private library of briefings after they have concluded. This should improve the accessibility of briefings, as well as ensuring that they are available after the meeting.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

2.1 This report is for noting only.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 This report is for noting only and therefore there are no preferred options.

4. RISK

4.1 There is no risk to this report as it is only for noting.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Democracy Committee agreed a new Learning and Development Charter at its meeting on 5 September 2018. The Learning and Development events outlined demonstrate the Council’s ongoing commitment to Learning and Development for councillors.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 There are no next steps as the report is for noting only. However a further update on Learning and Development will be provided, including budgetary information, at the first meeting of this (or its successor) Committee in the new municipal year.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	There are no recommendations – this report is for noting. However improving member Learning and Development will help the Council to achieve all of its Strategic Priorities.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Risk Management	This report is for noting and therefore there are no risk management implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Financial	There are no financial implications. All Learning and Development activities have been carried out within the existing budget.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Staffing	There are no staffing implications as the report is for noting.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Legal	There are no legal implications. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) the Council as a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

	<p>which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Learning and Development Charter and this report assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no privacy and data protection implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Equalities	No implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Public Health	No implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Crime and Disorder	No implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Procurement	No implications.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None