

Member Training Update

Final Decision-Maker	Democracy and General Purposes
Lead Director	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The report sets out the results of the member survey on training and an update on the plans for training in 2020-21

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

To note the update on Councillor Training and approve the proposed additions to the programme for 2020-21 set out in 3.2 and 3.3.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	1 July 2020
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	11 November 2020

Member Training Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in the report</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p><i>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heritage is Respected</i> • <i>Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</i> • <i>Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</i> • <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</i> <p>The member training programme should be designed with the cross-cutting objectives in mind.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
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	Principal Solicitor Contentious and Corporate Governance

	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.	
Privacy and Data Protection	No impact	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	no impact	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No impact	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	<i>On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for the external training identified We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.</i>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 1st of July Democracy and General Purposes considered a report on the Member training programme for 2020-21.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed to a short survey of Councillors to assess training needed and inform the training programme for 2020-21. This is in-line with the Member Development Charter:

The Charter sets out the following criteria for Member Development:

- There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support
- The council has a strategic approach to councillor learning and development
- Learning and development is effective in building capacity.

- 2.3 A survey was undertaken in August 2020 covering learning delivery methods, general knowledge development, skills development, expanding service knowledge and service satisfaction. 28 Councillors responded to the survey. The survey results are attached at Appendix A for information.
- 2.4 Preferred methods of learning were formal training facilitated sessions, online courses and modules and meetings with officers as needed. These are all approaches we would undertake in a usual training programme. However, with the current pandemic restrictions we are unable to offer any face to face or classroom style training. We will ensure that we re-introduce this when it is appropriate to do so.
- 2.5 Interestingly nearly 70% of respondents indicated that they would like to increase their knowledge of governance, procedures and the constitution, followed by understanding the council's services and policies. Member briefings are regularly scheduled to increase knowledge of services as well as access to council officers and external webinars if Councillors have particular training needs. We have not held training on the constitution and procedures so this will be scheduled as a webinar in January 2021.
- 2.6 We also asked about particular skills the top two identified were Questioning Skills and Social Media. We will commission external training on these two areas using the Member Training Budget and add this to the training programme in 2021. The other areas of diplomacy negotiation, presentation skills, handling the media and networking and advocacy identified will be put forward for the programme for 2021-22.
- 2.7 The following services were identified by 12 or more Councillors as areas where they would like to expand their knowledge:
- Housing and Homelessness
 - Benefits System
 - Community Protection
 - Local Government Finance
 - Local Plan

These areas can be included in the committee and Member briefings.

- 1.8 The majority of respondents were happy with the support provided to them. Some dissatisfaction has been expressed with the legal advice and technology and equipment available. This feedback will be passed on to the Legal Team and we will encourage all members who have problems with technology and equipment to ask for support via our member bulletin.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 In-light of the pandemic the training and methods of training available are limited. The proposal is that we continue with Councillor briefings and trainings virtually.
- 3.2 The following training will be added to the programme:

- In-House - Training on the constitution and rules and procedures
- Externally Facilitated Questioning Skills and Social Media Training

3.3 The following topics be included in Member Briefings:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Benefits System
- Community Protection
- Local Government Finance
- Local Plan

3.4 The Committee could choose not to add any additional training or tailor the briefings to the topics requested by Councillors.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee is asked to agree to the changes to Member training programme in order to facilitate councillor views and needs expressed in the survey responses. The proposal is to continue training in a virtual environment as required under the current restrictions imposed because of the pandemic.

5. RISK

5.1 This report has no risk management implications.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Committees can propose and agree training according to their respective needs and requirements in the constitution. A survey was conducted open to all Councillors and this has been used to inform the development of the Member Training Programme for 2020-21.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Subject to pandemic restrictions the training programme will be delivered in 2020-21, within budget and an update report will come back to this Committee at the end of the municipal year.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following document is to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix A: Member Survey Results

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None