

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**DATE OF MEETING: 16 FEBURARY 2020**

**TITLE OF REPORT: MEMBER TRAINING – A REVIEW**

**Report of: Joint Chief Executive**

**Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the council's member training to enable a discussion around the support and requirements for Members moving forwards.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the report and the training undertaken
- 2.2 For any areas of concern; that Overview and Scrutiny make a recommendation to Cabinet for consideration

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Hart District Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Peer Review in March 2018. A Peer Review is improvement-focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. It is not an inspection. Peer Reviews are delivered by experienced member and officer peers and consider the following questions which form the core components look at by all Peer Reviews;
1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting
  2. Leadership of Place
  3. Organisational Leadership and governance
  4. Financial planning and viability
  5. Capacity to deliver
- 3.2 In addition Hart District Council asked the Peer Review team to explore the councils' approach to commercialisation and member development.
- 3.2 The Peer Review Team spent three days in Hart. The process involved speaking to over 65 people including Councillors, staff, external partners and key stakeholders. They attended 30 different meetings and with additional research and reading spend collectively over 150 hours in determining their findings.
- 3.3 The findings of the Peer Review Team were formally considered by Cabinet in June 2018, and the Peer Review Action plan was adopted which included the

objective to establish a Member Development programme with a clear timetable for delivery.

#### **4 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The scale of the challenges that councils are currently facing requires strong, responsive and resilient leadership, to support their vital community leadership role.
- 4.2 To address this and provide Members with the tools, knowledge and expertise necessary, Member Development can be considered in four separate areas;
1. Areas where Councillors have statutory responsibilities, to themselves and to their communities ensuring they have the right information to hand, should issues or concerns arise. This grouping includes; Safeguarding, Equalities, GDPR and FOI (including cyber security), Fraud/Bribery and Corruption and Health and Safety
  2. Areas where Councillors have statutory responsibilities, subject to their membership on a committee. This includes for those Members or anticipated Deputies on Planning and Licensing Committee's
  3. Areas where Councillors may appreciate a deeper understanding of topics, to enable more informed decision making. This includes topics such as commercialisation, budgets/finances, understanding of how our services are provided etc.
  4. Soft skills appropriate to the role of the Member, such as Chairship skills, Use of IT, Community Engagement and Negotiation skills.
- 4.3 To ensure that the Member Development programme would best fit Members needs in terms of knowledge and understanding, and soft skills, a questionnaire was sent to all Members asking them to tick those topics they would find of most use.
- 4.4 Whilst reminders were sent, only a small proportion of Councillors responded to this call, the results are shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 Based on this limited feedback, and recognising the need to put in place the statutory training, a programme of training was put together and shared with all Councillors (see Appendix 2). The final two sessions on this appendix (public speaking and communications skills) had not been arranged when the Covid-19 pandemic began to impact the Council, as were postponed as a result.
- 4.6 To help Member attend sessions, recognising that many work or have other commitments, Members were provided options for attending the sessions. Often the Council were able to offer both daytime and evening sessions, sometimes also opening these up to Parish and Town Councils. On occasion, for effective delivery and use of resources, these sessions were staff training

sessions, open to Members to attend, as the principles are the same whether Member or member of staff.

## **5 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

5.1 Clearly the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on all parts of our lives. The election in May 2020 was postponed until May 2021, and as such, we retained the same Councillors as in previous years (reducing the need to re-run statutory or induction training for Members who had completed the training in 2019)

5.2 Whilst not officially arranged as Member Development sessions, the recent seminars on Vaccinations and the more recent Covid-19 update with Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health and Hampshire County Council, will have helped inform members in their role as community leader, the current picture on Covid-19 cases, the delivery model of vaccinations and lateral flow tests which hopefully councillors have found helpful.

5.3 Members have also been invited to the following development events this year.

- Hampshire Homes Hubs events (facilitated externally)
- Urban Design/Building for a Healthy Life (August)
- Understanding the Statement of Accounts (September)
- IT Security and Fraud (October)
- Budget Briefing (October)
- Understanding Treasury Management (December)

and planning is already underway for new-look Safeguarding Training, from April onwards.

5.4 Looking to the future, and recognising that the Council will once again, see elections this year, it seems an appropriate time to reflect on the Member training provided and the topics that Members may find helpful to be covered in future sessions.

## **6 ACTION**

6.1 Subject to the views of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that a recommendation be made to Cabinet on the topics to be covered in future refresh of the Member Development programme

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government Association Peer Review and Action Plan [Cabinet June 2018](#)

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### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Analysis of Member responses

Appendix 2 – Member Development Programme 2019/20

**Appendix 1****Analysis of Member responses when asked about the topics they would like to see on a Member Development Programme**(noting there was free text boxes for Councillors to propose their own topics)

Are there any particular aspects of your Council work that you have a keen interest in?

health and wellbeing	2
Environment	4
Community Engagement	3
Planning	8
Environmental Health	1
Conservation Areas	1
Heritage	1
Finance	2
Licensing	1
Planning enforcement	1
Planning Policy	3
Strategy	1
Housing	1

Considering your ambition for your ward and for the Council in general, what are your priorities and goals for the next 12 months?

local plan	4
regeneration	3
green space/countryside	1
leisure centre	1
improved member/officer relationship	1
improved public perception of the work of the Council	1
improved sharing of ideas and updates between officers/members and members/members	1
New or refurbished Harlington	2
Increased community transport	1
increased sustainability programmes EV use/greater recycling	1
redevelopment of the civic quarter	2
any new settlement is well thought through and has the requisite infrastructure and a sense of community	3
setting a balanced budget	1
commercialisation	2
comprehensive review of North Fleet Conservation Area	1
Flytipping	1
Greater community engagement	1

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Delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan	3
Provision of suitable "affordable" housing in Yateley	1
To make sure the Council deals with residents concerns speedily and effectively	2
Make sure the Council is future proofed so it can meet the needs of the Local Plan and Strategic Corporate Plan	1
Find ways to stop people wasting Council resources without achieving anything	1
IT development	1

What Skills and Knowledge would help you achieve these priorities and goals?

Local Government finance	1
Community engagement	1
Bid writing (for grants)	1
Marketing and communications	1
Bullying at work	1
Improving teamwork	1
Business planning	1
Negotiation skills	1
financial modelling	1
strategic thinking	1
Commercialisation (including governance)	1
Garden village principles	1
Conservation area training (including heritage assets)	1
Planning law	1
Greater understanding of Council processes and procedures	1
case management	1
Rules for speaking and debate at full council	1
IT skills	1

## Appendix 2 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2019/20

The development events in this programme have been arranged for elected members, as part of our strategic approach to councillor development and support. It has been shaped from the responses to the Member Development Survey that was issued during January 2019, and has at its core, the principle that learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.

The development programme takes on board the preferences Members have stated in this survey, in terms of learning methods:

- Internal briefings and workshops (1<sup>st</sup>)
- External seminars & conferences (joint 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- E-learning (joint 2<sup>nd</sup>)

### **Keeping development records**

A record of attendance at all development sessions will be kept by the committee services team. Members who wish to add to their record of development with training from other sources for CPD or other purposes are more than welcome to do so. Please send details to the committee services team.

### **Mandatory Knowledge**

In addition to mandatory training for regulatory functions for members and nominated deputies of certain committees, all members will receive an information sheet in respect of Safeguarding, Equalities, Data Protection and Health and Safety.

### **Local Government Association Support**

The LGA makes a wide range of development opportunities available – details can be found here <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership>

They also supply a series of councillor workbooks covering a range of topics - <https://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-workbooks>

These are distance learning material which members can download and work through, covering topics such as being an effective ward councillor, chairing skills, community leadership, handling casework, handling complaints, influencing skills, supporting residents with complex issues – and many more. Members are invited to make use of these. Again, records can be kept at committee services of workbooks completed.

For help and advice about any of the programme please contact Dymphna Aspell.

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Date	Time	Venue	Development Session	By Whom	Attendance	Who should attend
8 <sup>th</sup> May 9 <sup>th</sup> May 10 <sup>th</sup> May	10am-4pm 10am-4pm 10am-4pm	Chief Executives Office	<p><b>Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b>            Informal drop in sessions where each Member will sign the Declaration of Acceptance.            Attendance only required on one day</p>	Chief Executives	Essential	All Members
16 <sup>th</sup> May	7pm	Council Chamber	<p><b>Annual Meeting</b>            This is the meeting during which appointments to Council Committees will be considered  <b>(NB: for New Members, photographs will be taken)</b></p>	Chairman	Expected	All Members
20 <sup>th</sup> May	7pm	Council Chamber	<p><b>Planning Committee Training</b>            Planning training is mandatory for Councillors expecting to sit on the Planning Committee, or act as a substitute for it. Please speak to your Political Group Leader with regards to who is attending this training.</p> <p><u>This session is mainly aimed at people new to Planning</u>, or those with just a years experience, open to all Councillors. May be attended as well as a refresher.</p>	Externally provided	Essential for Planning Committee Members to attend this training or a refresher	Members and substitutes for Planning  Optional for all other Councillors
21 <sup>st</sup> May	2pm	Ground Floor Meeting Room 4	<p><b>Planning Committee Training</b>            Planning training is mandatory for Councillors expecting to sit on the Planning Committee, or act as a substitute for it. Please speak to your Political Group Leader with regards to who is attending this training.</p> <p>This session complements and extends the topics covered on the 20<sup>th</sup></p> <p><u>This session is a refresher to those Members with more experience</u>, it would be useful for those with less experience who attended the</p>	Externally Provided	Essential for Planning Committee Members to attend this training or a refresher	Members and substitutes for Planning  Optional for all other Councillors

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Date	Time	Venue	Development Session	By Whom	Attendance	Who should attend
			session on the 20 <sup>th</sup> as it will build further knowledge			
21 <sup>st</sup> May	6.30pm	Basingstoke and Deane Council	<b>Licensing Committee Training</b> Licensing Training is mandatory for those expecting to sit on the Licensing Committee, and those who may be asked to substitute on the Committee. Members may not sit on a Licensing Hearing Panel without training. Open to all Councillors	Robert Draper Interim Regulatory Services Manager (BDBC)	Essential for Licensing committee Members to attend one of these two sessions and optional for others	Members and substitutes for Licensing  Optional for all other Councillors
24 <sup>th</sup> May	10am	Council Chamber	<b>Licensing Committee Training</b> Licensing Training is mandatory for those expecting to sit on the Licensing Committee, and those who may be asked to substitute on the Committee. Members may not sit on a Licensing Hearing Panel without training. Open to all Councillors	Robert Draper Interim Regulatory Services Manager (BDBC)		Members and substitutes for Licensing  Optional for all other Councillors
29 <sup>th</sup> May	9am	Council Chamber	<b>New Member Induction</b> Essential training for newly elected Members (or those wishing a refresher) covering including an introduction to key staff, important policies and procedures, guidance and preparation for Committee Meetings (including a mock Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting)	Joint Chief Executives and Heads of Service	Essential for all newly elected Members, useful refresher for other Members	All Councillors
30 <sup>th</sup> May	7pm	Council Chamber	<b>Planning Committee Training</b> Planning training is mandatory for Councillors expecting to sit on the Planning Committee, or act as a substitute for it. Please speak to your Political Group Leader with regards to who is attending this training.  This session complements and extends the topics covered on the 20 <sup>th</sup>	Externally Provided	Essential for Planning Committee Members to attend this training or a refresher	Members and substitutes for Planning  Optional for all other Councillors

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Date	Time	Venue	Development Session	By Whom	Attendance	Who should attend
			<p><u>This session is a refresher to those Members with more experience</u>, it would be useful for those with less experience who attended the session on the 20<sup>th</sup> as it will build further knowledge</p>			
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	7pm	Council Chamber	<p><b>GDPR</b> This training aims to recall and reinforce previously acquired GDPR knowledge and skills. This training is mandatory for Councillors, particularly as they are data controllers. (Invitations extended to Parishes)</p>	Externally Provided	Essential	All Members
5 <sup>th</sup> June	6pm	Council Chamber	<p><b>Service profile – Community Services</b> This service profile session will give members an understanding of the services provided within this area, including an outline of current issues and challenges.</p>	Kirsty Jenkins Head of Community Services	Expected	All Members
25 <sup>th</sup> June	10am	Council Chamber	<p><b>GDPR</b> This training aims to recall and reinforce previously acquired GDPR knowledge and skills. This will be useful to Members/Parish Councillors who were unable to attend the session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June</p>	Externally Provided	Essential	All Members
27 <sup>th</sup> June	10.30am	West Berkshire Council Offices	<p><b>New Councillor Induction Event</b> South East Employers for new Members to complement the Hart induction programme</p>	Externally Provided		New Members
27 <sup>th</sup> June	7pm	Council Chamber	<p><b>Commercialisation – what does it mean and why is it important</b> This session will explore what commercialisation means to a local authority and will look at some examples of interesting commercial projects in other councils. The</p>	Daryl Phillips, JCE and Andrew Vallance, Head of	Expected	All Members

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Date	Time	Venue	Development Session	By Whom	Attendance	Who should attend
			session will assist in increasing understanding around the need for commercialisation within the local government financial framework, and specifically at Hart.	Corporate Services		
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	2pm	Council Chamber	<b>GDPR</b> This training aims to recall and reinforce previously acquired GDPR knowledge and skills. This will be useful to Members/Parish Councillors who were unable to attend the session on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Externally Provided	Essential	All Members
23 <sup>rd</sup> October	7pm	Council Chamber	<b>Garden Communities</b> Following the recent inclusion of Hart District Council in the Garden Communities Programme, Lord Taylor of Goss Moor will outline some of the benefits of Garden Communities	Externally Provided	Optional	All Ward Members, MP's, Chairman of Parishes invited
Nov 2019	6pm		<b>Service profile – Corporate Services</b> This service profile session will give members an understanding of the services provided within this area, including an outline of current issues and challenges.	Andrew Vallance, Head of Corporate Services	Expected	All Members
31 Oct 2019	7pm	Council Chamber	<b>Fraud Training</b> Mandatory for councillors, this session aims to reinforce Fraud awareness, keeping Members updated on any new fraud risks, cyber crime and Councillor responsibilities.	Jamie Ayling, Fraud Investigator Basingstoke & Deane	Essential	All members
Jan 2019	TBC		<b>Financial Awareness</b> This session builds an understanding of how the Council's budget formulation process works and how to understand the Council's financial position.	Andrew Vallance, Head of Corporate Services	Optional	All Members
Jan 2019	evening session		<b>Service profile – Technical Services</b> This service profile session will give members an understanding of the services provided	John Elson, Head of Technical Services	Expected	All members

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Date	Time	Venue	Development Session	By Whom	Attendance	Who should attend
			within this area, including an outline of current issues and challenges.			
Feb 2020			<b>Service profile – Place</b> This service profile session will give members an understanding of the services provided within this area, including an outline of current issues and challenges.	TBC	Expected	All Members
Feb 2020			<b>Public speaking and making presentations</b> Elevate your presentation skills to the next level. This session gives an opportunity to Improve your public speaking skills and learn top tips on how to get your message across.	TBC – external trainer	Optional	All Members
26 Mar 2020			<b>Communication skills including social media</b> This session will refresh Members communication skills including working with journalists and the media, and use of social media.	TBC – external trainer	Optional	All Members

- Note:
- Dates in red are dates identified for training / briefing as a result of reduction in full council meetings.
  - Some courses will also be available to staff and where there is space, to parish and town councils