

Committee: Standards and General Purposes Committee

Date: Wards: All

Subject: Report on Member Development

Lead officer: Kim Brown, HR Lead

Lead member: Cllr Mark Allison

Contact officer: Kim Brown Ext 3152

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee agrees the draft learning and development plan for 2018/19
 2. That the Committee agrees the priority development activities for members as outlined in 2.10 of this report
 3. That the Committee agrees that there will be elements of mandatory training for members
 4. that Committee considers ways to encourage increased member take-up for development activities
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Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Member Development programme offer to members and explore ways to improve attendance at development events. The Council has committed itself to ensuring that all Members have access to learning and development that supports them and allows them to develop the necessary skills to fulfil their varied roles.
- 1.2 The provision of member development is managed within the HR division through close collaboration with Democracy Services.

2. Details

- 2.1 Member development is based on the following principles:

- The development will be based upon the identified and agreed needs of the individual Elected Member and they will contribute fully to that identification
- Development will be delivered through a variety of methods and at times that ensure equality of access for Elected Members diverse personal circumstances, backgrounds and learning styles
- The Council has a learning culture that views continuous development for all its staff and elected Members as vital to its success.
- The Council acknowledges that Elected Members may have transferable skills from their work place and/or life experiences that can be used to help them perform their Council role.

2.2 The proposal for managing and delivering member development consists of three main components outlined below:

(1) Ongoing personal/generic development

(2) Induction post-election

2.3 **Ongoing personal/generic development**

Most councillors have very busy lives and many work during the day. The development activities for members are arranged in the evening and sometimes at the weekend (induction). The appropriate training is provided to councillors to enable them to fulfill their statutory obligation. There are some committees where members have to be trained before they are able to sit on these committees such as planning and licensing.

2.4 Generic development is identified by the roles members need to fulfil and legislation. A list of generic activities delivered since May 2014 shows:

Event Title	No of attendees
Budget Scrutiny	27
Briefing on the New Website	24
Chairing Skills	12
Child Protection	17
Dementia	21
Effective Opposition	9
Health Champions	14
Health in All Polices- Prevention Matters Workshop	22
Induction- Overview and Scrutiny	24
Induction- The role of a Councillor Part 1	20
Induction- The role of a Councillor Part 2	24
Induction- Keeping our people safe (Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding)	35
Induction- Community Leadership	24
Licensing for committee members	18
Licensing for ward members	14
Mind Mapping and Speed reading	4
Planning for committee members	16
Planning for Ward Members	20
Protecting yourself and your constituents	7
Public Speaking	15
Tools and Techniques to cope with paperwork	5
Understanding Budgets	25
Universal Credit and Housing	33
Total	430

2.5 It is recognised that in addition to generic needs, members will have differing and specific needs which need to be addressed through specific and individual learning interventions. To ascertain development needs members are invited to meet with a council officer to discuss them or are asked to complete a personal development form – Appendix D. Since 2014, 27 completed forms have been received. In the past, it has proved difficult to get members to complete personal development plans.

2.6 Members have the opportunity to attend development offered by the Local Government Association, London Councils. Examples of the courses available from the LGA are outlined in Appendix A. These opportunities are circulated to members and approval must be obtained by the group offices

prior to being booked by HR. More information on the content and other LGA learning and development opportunities are available to view information at <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership> (Appendix A provides an example of current offering)

2.7 Groups or members may require specific training based on the roles that they hold or are required to be fulfil such as Cabinet or Opposition. Development may also be provided and arranged within parties, such as mentoring and coaching by more experienced elected members.

2.8 In order to provide focus to the development offer it was proposed that elements of the member development programme should be mandatory and be undertaken by each councillor at least once during the 4-year municipal period:

- safeguarding (adults and children)

- Equalities

- Information security

In addition:

- Planning (for Planning Committee members)

- Pension (for Pension Fund Advisory Committee members)

- Licensing (for Licensing Committee members)

Since October 2017, seventeen (17) Councillors have attended Child protection training. Those who need to sit on planning or licencing committees have attended a one to one session.

Information Security training is available online and logins can be sent to Councillors to complete the e learning.

2.9 **Potential candidates**

The Council in the past has run at least three sessions for candidates who would wish to be Elected members. The sessions are usually advertised in the local press. The session covered the following areas:

- The London Borough of Merton
- The Committee System
- Benefits of being a councillor
- Skills needed to be a Councillor
- Talk to Merton Councillors about 'Being a Councillor'
- Member allowances and support available

A session for prospective councillors has been scheduled to take place on the 28th October 2017 and 14th March 2018.

2.10 Proposed learning and development plan for 2017/19

A draft development programme with dates and titles through to March 2019 has been prepared for the Committee's comments – appendix B. It is proposed that the priority activities for 2018/19 should include:

- information security
- safeguarding
- equalities

Other generic learning activities:

- Charing skills
- Public speaking
- How to participate effectively in Committee meetings
- Managing in political environment
- Communication skills
- Effective questioning skills
- Corporate Parenting
- ICT skills and the use of technology
- Understanding projects
- Community leadership
- Social media
- Resilience

These programmes will be commissioned and advertised (six weeks) in advance of the event taking place to provide Councillors with adequate time to book themselves on sessions. The sessions are booked using dates from the Corporate calendar – avoiding meetings and committees.

2.11 Induction – post election

All newly elected members are required to attend induction. In 2014, the induction process was reviewed and in response to members' feedback was condensed from a two-week induction to six sessions over a number of weeks. In addition to the Council offer London Councils produce Councillors handbooks and members briefing and updates via email. Appendix C outlines the proposed induction programme for 2018.

- 2.12 As part of this report, the Committee's views are being sought on best way to encourage take-up of member development activities. The process currently is to email members with upcoming events and through the group officers. Encouraging members to attend development session is not unique to Merton, as this has been raised on several occasions at the London Member Development Network.

3. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 3.1 It is proposed that updates are supplied to this committee and CMT.

4. Timetable

- 4.1 To be agreed by the committee

5. Financial, resource and property implications

- 5.1 Delivery of the development plan will be done using existing resources.

6. Legal and statutory implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the report

7. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

7.1 Member development enables members to make decisions, which can impact the communities they serve.

8. Crime and Disorder implications

8.1 None

9. Risk management and health and safety implications

9.1 None

10. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

10.1 Appendix A- LGA programmes for Councillors and dates

Appendix B- Member's Training Plan

Appendix C- Example Induction Programme (provided as a separate document)

Appendix D- Personal Development Form (provided as a separate document)

11. Background papers

11.1 None

Appendix A

Local Government Association Programmes for Councillors

LGA- Leadership essentials

'Leadership Essentials' is a series of events designed as themed learning opportunities for councillors. Each event concentrates on a specific portfolio area, such as Planning or Children's Services, or a specific theme, such as communications or digital leadership. The majority of events are subsidised, for information on how to book contact

members.developmentenquiries@merton.gov.uk

More information on the content and other LGA learning and development opportunities are available, see appendix ...

Grace Collins

Telephone: 020 7664 3054

Email: Grace.Collins@local.gov.uk

Working with the Media Masterclass

New Conversations Political Leadership Masterclass

Leading Culture Change Masterclass

Risk Management Political Leadership Masterclass

Leadership Essentials Adult Social Care

Leadership Essentials: Children's Services

Leadership Essentials Health and Wellbeing for HWB Chairs and Vice Chairs

Commissioning Academy for Elected Members

Leadership Essentials: Finance Programme

Leadership Essentials: Getting Your Message Across

Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny

Leadership Essentials Sport and Physical Activity

Leadership Essentials Planning

Leadership Essentials: PREVENT

E-Learning

There are currently eight councillor e-learning modules available to download from the LGA E-Learning platform for councillors. They are on:

- Effective Ward Councillor
- Facilitation and Conflict Resolution
- Handling Complaints for Service Improvement
- Induction
- Scrutiny
- Police and Crime Panels
- Regulation & Licensing
- Community Leadership and Engagement

These can be accessed via the LGA website through the following URL: <http://lms.learningnexus.co.uk/LGA/> further modules will follow shortly. In order to access the modules, councillors need to register to use the system, and receive a user name and password. They can do this by emailing elearning@local.gov.uk.

Appendix B

Member's Training Plan

Title	Date	Time
Social media	1 st November 2017	7pm-9pm
Welcome for New Councillors	5 th May 2018	10am-12 noon
Induction – The role of a councillor part 1	10 th May 2018	7pm-9pm
Induction- The role of a councillor part 2	15 th May 2018	7pm-9pm
Introduction to finance and business planning	22 nd May 2018	7pm-9pm
Keeping you and your constituents safe	28 th May 2018	7pm-9pm
Community leadership	6 th June 2018	7pm-9pm
Licensing for Committee Members	12 th June 2018	7pm-9pm
Planning for Committee Members	21 st June 2018	7pm-9pm
Information Security	online	online
Budget Scrutiny	9 th January 2018	7pm-9pm
Using the Councils new website	22 nd January 2018	7pm-9pm
Equalities	27 th February 2018	7pm-9pm
Public Speaking	28 th March 2018	7pm-9pm
Chairing Skills	5 th September 2018	7pm-9pm
Effective questioning skills	19 th September 2018	7pm-9pm

ICT skills and the use of technology	25 th October 2018	7pm-9pm
Communication skills	10 th October 2018	7pm-9pm
Safeguarding	7 th November 2018	7pm-9pm
How to participate effectively in Committee meetings	21 st November 2018	7pm-9pm
Corporate Parenting	5 th December 2018	7pm-9pm
Resilience	20 th March 2019	7pm-9pm

Become a Councillor Events

Date	Time
Saturday 28 th October	10am- 1pm
Wednesday 14 th March	6pm-9pm

Appendix C – Example Induction Programme

Provided as a separate document

Appendix D – Member development form

Provided as a separate document

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