

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Audit and Governance Committee

Date: 15 March 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Subject: REVIEW OF MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

The Audit and Governance Committee is charged with monitoring the arrangements for members' training and development to ensure that the capacity of members to provide effective governance and community leadership continues to develop. This report outlines the position regarding member training and briefing sessions in 2019/20; considers the draft training programme for 2020/21 and presents the New Member Induction Booklet for approval, with the opportunity for Members to make suggestions on items for inclusion.

*The Audit and Governance Committee area of responsibility for Standards includes to: -
(k) monitor and review members' training and development.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that the Audit and Governance Committee: -

- (a) notes the Schedule of Training and Development for 2019/20 as outlined in Appendix A;
- (b) agrees that the draft member's training and development schedule for each forthcoming municipal year will be approved at the last audit and governance committee of each municipal year;
- (c) notes the contents of the draft member's training and development schedule for 2020/21, at appendix B, and provides recommendations for additional items to be added;
- (d) approves the draft new members' induction booklet 2020 as set out in appendix C and makes recommendations for suggested additions to new member training; and
- (e) agrees the content of the new members' induction booklet is reviewed by the audit and governance committee every three years.

INTRODUCTION

1. In November 2003 the Standards Committee Terms of Reference were revised to include responsibility for monitoring Members' training and development and it was agreed that the Committee would review the proposed programme of training annually to ensure it met Members' needs as well as undertaking an annual review of the range and quality of training and development.
2. In March 2013, the Audit and Governance committee agreed that a new approach to new member induction training be approved in a modular form to provide on-going support to new members.

THE STRATEGY

3. The committee is reminded of the main provisions of the Council's training and development strategy which contributes to the Council's aims and objectives and underpins good practice.
4. The strategy aims to provide members with opportunities for developing a range of skills and a depth of knowledge which will equip them to fulfil their roles and provide effective community governance. It recognises that these skills and knowledge are developed through a variety of means, not just through formal training events. Thus, members' skills and knowledge may be equally developed through informal arrangements such as personal reading and research, newsletters and briefing reports; interaction with other members, officers, constituents, joint working with other authorities and with partners; shadowing, coaching and mentoring.
5. The strategy recognises that in the main, members' development can be managed by the individual members themselves; however, in order to establish a development framework, an annual programme of training events which reflects more precisely the needs of all Councillors would be established. The individual needs of Councillors will be addressed wherever possible and a variety of development methods offered to suit the individual member.
6. The majority of knowledge-based training can be delivered in-house within existing budgets. Where externally led training does need to be provided, priority will be given to those topics which benefit several members but, budget permitting, lower priority items will be delivered. Where external trainers are used, they are chosen for their knowledge of the subject as well as experience in training delivery.
7. Members are informed of training opportunities by way of the Member's newsletter and/or by email/calendar invitation which enables the Member to accept or decline and allows the session to automatically populate in their calendar. The additional benefit of inviting members via calendar invitation is it enables the Committee team to see the proposed attendance and manage the session to ensure effective use of meeting rooms.
8. Dates for Member forthcoming training and briefing sessions are also included on the Members' Monthly newsletter.

2019/20

9. A report was prepared for the Audit and Governance Committee for their consideration at their meeting on 23 March 2020 and was published within the [Agenda pack](#) on the Council's website. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and subsequent National

Lockdown, this meeting was cancelled.

10. An overview of the Member training and briefing sessions delivered during 2019/20 is attached for Member's information at appendix A. This was appended to the original report due to be considered by the Committee in March 2020 and Members are now being asked to note this.
11. It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented considerable challenges to officers and Members alike as we have adapted our ways of working to cope with the issues of working remotely. There are no statistics available on the subject of learning to work within the Microsoft Teams video conferencing application, although the significant amount of resource time for officers preparing the connectivity and providing guidance on using the online method to join virtual meetings should be recognised.

2020/21

12. The Local Elections scheduled to take place in May 2020 were postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic resulting in no change to our current Councillors at May 2020 and therefore no new Member training, or refresher training, was undertaken.
13. Some Member training and briefing sessions were held virtually in the year and these are listed in Appendix B.
14. It should be noted that at the commencement of each municipal year, a skeleton schedule of training sessions is prepared and this is expanded throughout the year with topics relevant to current issues and projects as the Council works to deliver its priorities and these items will also, most certainly, have an interest to Borough residents, hence the need for Councillor awareness.
15. The Council offers Safeguarding training to all new Councillors, as well as an annual refresher session at some point during the municipal year.

2021/22

16. Research of attendance has identified that some Members are not up to date with Safeguarding training, particularly following the adoption of the new policy, and therefore as well as covering Safeguarding on Module three - Newly Elected Cllr: Induction Training Day, officers will be offering a further date for this training to capture attendance by all Members.
17. At the time of publishing this report, whilst the UK is still experiencing a National Lockdown due to the Pandemic, the Local Elections remain scheduled for 06 May 2021 and, as such, dates have been scheduled for new Member training to take place. These will also be offered to existing Councillors, should they wish to use these as refresher sessions.
18. Attached at appendix C is the draft Schedule of Training and Development for 2021/22. Members are invited to comment on this and make recommendations for training items for inclusion.

NEW MEMBER TRAINING MODULES

19. All new Members receive a Member Induction booklet as part of an introduction package distributed after the election results are declared. This was introduced following

feedback from Members during previous consultations.

20. Included within the introduction package is a booklet which sets out training modules for new Councillors in their first six months.
21. Due to the Elections being held on the 6 May 2021 and the first Council meeting on the 13 May 2021, there is a tight timescale for the initial modules which introduce new Members to the Council, as well as covering essential procedural information for the Annual Council meeting and administrative tasks.
22. The draft Member Induction booklet is included at Appendix D and Members are invited to make suggestions for items to be included within those new Councillor training modules.

RISK ASSESSMENT

23. The decisions the committee is being asked to make presents minimal risk but it gives Members of the Committee an opportunity to influence the training provided to new and existing Councillors, based on their experiences and knowledge.
24. It is important to adopt a programme of training and development which is responsive to Members' needs and without this, it could possibly restrict the capacity of the Council to fulfil its responsibilities of community leadership and local governance.

CONCLUSION

25. Members are asked to consider this report and have an input towards New Member Induction training as well as the overall All Member Training modules for the next municipal year.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Members' Training and Briefing Schedule 2019/20

Appendix B – Members' Training and Briefing Schedule 2020/21

Appendix C - Draft Members' Training and Briefing Schedule 2021/22

Appendix D - Draft New Members' Induction Booklet 2021

Background Papers:

Training attendance records

Reference Papers:

Minutes of the Standards Committee 26 November 2003

(<http://moderngov.fareham.gov.uk/Data/Standards%20Committee/20031126/Minutes/sc-031126-m.pdf>); and

Report to the Audit and Governance Committee on Member training & development and revised New Member Induction package (ref au-130311-r11-ewi)

(<http://moderngov.fareham.gov.uk/documents/g1769/Public%20reports%20pack%2011th-Mar-2013%2018.00%20Audit%20and%20Governance%20Committee.pdf?T=10>)

Report to the Audit and Governance Committee 23 March 2020
(<http://moderngov.fareham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MIId=3819&Ver=4>)

Enquiries:

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