

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of the Director of Finance

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Councillor Training and Development Annual Report 2017-18

Executive Summary

As agreed by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, the Councillor Development Steering Group will submit an annual report to consider matters relating to the ongoing councillor training and development programme.

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Steering Group to date, the ongoing training and development programme and the work being carried out in terms of developing a dedicated microsite on the Guildford Borough Council website for prospective candidates that want to become a councillor, and the provision of an online e-learning management system for councillors.

Recommendation to the Committee:

That the Committee notes the valuable work being undertaken by the Councillor Development Steering Group in developing a clear structured plan for councillor development that responds both to the Council's corporate priorities and councillors' individual training needs.

Reason for Recommendation:

To recognise the important and ongoing work of the Councillor Development Steering Group.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Committee to consider matters relating to the ongoing councillor training and development programme.

2. Strategic Priorities

2.1 The training and development of councillors to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enable them effectively to carry out the various roles that they are expected to perform is consistent with the principles of good corporate governance and is referenced in the Annual Governance Statement as part of the arrangements the Council has for delivering good governance. The

processes and procedures put in place for councillors' training and development provide a robust framework for responding to future challenges and legislative changes, which, in turn, help the Council to deliver on all of its strategic priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 Any council that is serious about meeting the needs of its community through its corporate plan priorities must be committed to the ongoing training and development of its councillors. Most councils have some form of support programme in place. However, the approach and levels of commitment and effectiveness vary.

Councillors' Development Steering Group

- 3.2 It is essential that member development is member-led and, to that end, a small cross party steering group, currently comprising seven councillors¹, supported by Committee Services officers, is responsible for overall co-ordination of member development at Guildford.

- 3.3 The Steering Group's current terms of reference are:

“To continue to support councillors in their ongoing development and training needs through a clear, structured Action Plan for councillor development that responds to the fundamental themes that support the vision of the Corporate Plan: Place-making, Community and Innovation.”

- 3.4 The Steering Group meets every three months and the standing items on each agenda include:

- Feedback from Councillor Training Events from the previous quarter
- The ongoing Councillors' Training and Development Programme
- Monitoring of expenditure against the Councillors' Training and Development Budget

Ongoing training and development programme

- 3.5 As stated in paragraph 3.4 above, the Steering Group considers the ongoing training and development programme for councillors at each of its meetings. Since September 2017, the following training and development events for councillors have been held:

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
21 Sep 2017	Treasury Management - Claire Morris and Victoria Worsfold
4 Oct 17	Planning Law Update – Cornerstone Barristers
11 Oct 17	Overview and Scrutiny Training – John Cade
25 Oct 17	Ethical Standards – Meyric Lewis
1 Nov 2017	Planning - Flooding, Sequential Tests, SUDS and Environment Agency – Surrey County Council Officers
13 Nov 17	Prevent Strategy Training – Dawn Nicol
29 Nov 17	Planning – Retail Sequential Test Training – GBC Officers
7 Dec 17	Guildford Design Guide – Meave Faulkner

¹ Councillor Colin Cross, Councillor Angela Gunning, Councillor Mike Hurdle, Councillor Mike Parsons, Councillor Dennis Paul, Councillor Jo Randall and Councillor Iseult Roche.

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
3 Jan 18	Sequential Test – GBC Officers
13 Feb 18	Guildford Design Guide 2 – Meave Faulkner (Design and Conservation Team Leader)
13 Mar 18	General Data Protection Regulation for Parish Councillors – Graeme Fearon (Thrings Solicitors)
20 Mar 18	General Data Protection Regulation for Borough Councillors – Graeme Fearon
10 May 18	General Data Protection Regulation - Repeat Session for Councillors and Parish Councillors – Graeme Fearon
29 May 2018	Chairing Skills Training – Mark Palmer (South East Employers)
18 Jul 2018	Trees and the Planning Process – Tim Holman (Arboricultural Officer)
15 Aug 2018	Giving Weight to the emerging Local Plan in determining planning applications – Stuart Harrison (Planning Policy Manager and Laura Howard (Principal Policy Planner)
18 Sep 2018	Overview and Scrutiny Training – John Cade

3.6 Councillors have recently completed their Personal Development Plans. The response rate required by South East Employers in meeting the requirements of the Charter for Elected Member Development of 60% was achieved. The Councillor Development Steering Group have therefore tailored the 2018-19 councillor training programme in line with the Personal Development Plan responses provided by councillors. Key training identified included:

- Chairing Skills;
- Dealing with the Media;
- Use of Social Media;
- Ongoing Licensing and Planning Committee Training and;
- Overview and Scrutiny Training

3.7 The Steering Group also continue to support the arrangement of bite-sized training prior to Planning Committee and Corporate Governance and Standards Committee meetings. This has proved to be successful in terms of increasing attendance at such training and the Steering Group will be looking at opportunities to extend bite sized training to other committees.

3.8 The Steering Group is also keen to share training with other local authorities which would prove useful especially after the elections in May 2019. We have currently scheduled some refresher licensing training on the Licensing Act 2003 on 2 October 2018 and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing training on 22 November 2018 in partnership with Waverley Borough Council. We hope to build upon such shared learning opportunities as it provides a useful platform for councillors from other authorities to network and learn from each other's experiences.

3.9 The 2018-19 Councillor Training Programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Preparation for Elections and 'Becoming a Councillor' in 2019

3.10 The main focus for the Councillor Development Steering Group now is to prepare for the forthcoming elections in May 2019. This will be promoted through the 'beacouncillor.co.uk/guildford' website which can be viewed here: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/20557/Becoming-a-Councillor>. Becoming a Councillor sessions are scheduled on 29 October 2018 and 11 February

2019 and will be held in the Council Chamber. A comprehensive 'Guide to being a Councillor' is currently being devised which will include an induction programme to be held from May-July 2019 for new and re-elected councillors. The proposed induction programme will be available to give to prospective new councillors at the 'Becoming a Councillor' sessions to give them a flavour of what to expect.

- 3.11 A copy of the programme for the first Becoming a Councillor Session is attached as **Appendix 2**, and a copy of the induction programme is attached as **Appendix 3**.

E-Learning Modules Learningpool

- 3.12 The Steering Group agreed that councillors would also find it beneficial to have access to an on-line e-learning management system, hosted by Learning Pool. Courses are written specifically for councillors, covering topics such as:

1. Chaining Meetings
2. Community Leadership
3. Data Protection
4. Equality and Diversity
5. Social Media
6. Public Speaking Skills
7. Safeguarding Adults
8. Safeguarding Children and Young People
9. Working with the Media
10. Your Role as a Councillor

- 3.13 The online e-learning management system was made available for councillors on 1 September 2017 for a two year period. To date, the use of this online e-learning tool has not been high. However, officers and the Steering Group will promote its availability for the ensuing year. It is anticipated that these modules will be of particular value to new councillors following the elections in 2019 as well as current councillors by providing an additional learning aid.

Dedicated Learning and Development section of Guildford Borough Council website

- 3.14 We have now created a dedicated learning and development space on the Council's website that is password protected for councillors. The site has gone live on the Council's website and can be viewed here: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/councillorspages>. This has substituted the information currently available on the Loop (intranet) which, following feedback from councillors, was difficult to access.

The Charter for Elected Member Development

- 3.15 The Charter provides a robust, structured framework designed to help councils enhance and hone member development. The Charter is available for councils, police and fire authorities across the south-east region. To date, 19 councils in the South East (outside London) have achieved accreditation.
- 3.16 Guildford achieved full accreditation under the Charter initially in 2013, and were successfully reaccredited on 8 November 2016. Guildford also successfully completed the 18 month interim assessment on 11 June 2018

and therefore continues to meet the standards required of the Charter. The Council will be due to undertake the full reassessment in November 2019.

- 3.17 The potential future priorities for the Councillor Development Steering Group to work towards are detailed in an Action Plan, which is attached as **Appendix 4** to this report.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Councillors' Training and Development budget is £12,000 per annum and the Steering Group oversees and monitors how this is spent throughout the year.
- 4.2 We are currently within budget, which incorporates all forthcoming training scheduled in this financial year.
- 4.3 The cost to the Council for assessment under the Charter for Elected Member Development is £2,500, which covers a three-year period and the next payment is due in January 2021.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Human Resource Implications

- 6.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report. All officer support for councillors' development is met through existing staffing resources.

7. Background papers

None

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Current councillors' training and development programme
Appendix 2: 'Becoming a Councillor' programme – 29 October 2018
Appendix 3: Induction Programme for newly elected councillors (May to July 2019)
Appendix 4: Action Plan