

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of the Joint Strategic Director (Transformation and Governance)

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Councillor Training and Development Annual Report 2022-23

Executive Summary

As agreed previously by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, the cross-party 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.

At its meeting on 16 June, this Committee reviewed the task groups reporting to it, including the Councillor Development Steering Group and agreed that the Steering Group should continue with its work. The Committee approved the membership of the Steering Group for 2022-23 as follows:

Councillor Colin Cross,
Councillor Angela Gunning,
Councillor Jo Randall,
Councillor Pauline Searle
Councillor Catherine Young

The Committee also agreed that any appointed member may be substituted by any other member of their political group.

Since the last annual report, it was noted how the coronavirus pandemic had changed the way in which the Council was able to offer training and development opportunities for councillors and staff. Since the lifting of lockdown restrictions, we have offered a blend of both online as well as in person training as appropriate.

Recommendation to the Committee:

- (1) 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.
- (2) That the Executive be asked to agree to make provision in the draft budget for 2023-24 of £22,000 to cover the cost of new councillor induction including executive member training, with the budget reverting to £14,000 p.a. thereafter.

Reason for Recommendation:

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

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

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 five councillors, supported by Democratic Services officers, is responsible for overall co-ordination of member development at Guildford.

- 3.3 The Steering Group normally meets on a quarterly basis 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

- 3.4 At its meeting on 16 June, this Committee reviewed the task groups reporting to it, including the Councillor Development Steering Group and agreed that the Steering Group should continue with its work. The Committee also approved the membership of the Steering Group for 2022-23 as follows:

Councillor Colin Cross,
 Councillor Angela Gunning,
 Councillor Jo Randall,
 Councillor Pauline Searle
 Councillor Catherine Young

The Committee also agreed that any appointed member may be substituted by any other member of their political group. At its meeting on 27 July 2022, the Steering Group elected Councillor Searle as chairman for 2022-23.

Ongoing training and development programme

- 3.5 As stated in paragraph 3.3 above, the Steering Group considers the ongoing training and development programme for councillors at each of its meetings. Since the last Annual Report, the following training and development events for councillors have been held (or are planned to be held by the end of October 2022):

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING (AND TRAINER)	No of Cllrs in Attendance
7 Sept 21	Charing Meetings Refresher Training – Mark Palmer (South East Employers)/delivered online via MS Teams	8 Cllrs 3 of which were from Waverley BC
13 Sept 21	Overview of Local Government Financial Reporting and Guide to the Accounting Statements – David Ellis (CIPFA)/delivered online via MS Teams	10 Cllrs 3 of which were from Waverley BC
13 Oct 21	How to use Social Media (Paul Marcus Media)/delivered online via MS Teams	4 Cllrs
10 Nov 21	Working with the Media (Paul Marcus Media)/delivered online via MS Teams	6 Cllrs
29 Nov, 9 Dec and 13 Dec 21	Carbon Literacy for Elected Members - Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) 29 Nov 21 – The Science of Climate Change and Climate Impacts 9 Dec 21 – Policy – Carbon Budgets, Carbon Footprints and the Co-Benefits of Carbon Change	12 Cllrs 13 Cllrs

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING (AND TRAINER)	No of Cllrs in Attendance
	13 Dec 21 – Climate Actions for Council's and Influencing Others All three sessions delivered online via MS Teams	16 Cllrs
28 Jan 22	1 to 1 with Mayor Elect on Chairing Council Meetings – John Armstrong, (Democratic Services and Elections Manager) /delivered in person	1 Cllr
14 Mar 22	Personal Safety and Conflict De-escalation – Brooks Jordan Training Services/delivered in person	11 Cllrs
22 Jun 22	Chairing Skills Refresher Training – Mark Palmer (South East Employers)/delivered online via MS Teams	8 Cllrs 1 of which was from Waverley BC
20 Oct 22	Ethical Standards Training – Bethan Evans/to be delivered in person	-

- 3.6 All of the above training was held online, apart from the Personal Safety and Conflict De-Escalation training which required in-person participation. We have also scheduled an Ethical Standards Training session for all councillors to be held in October in person. We felt that it would be more engaging for members to offer this type of training in person given it requires some group work which is better facilitated face to face. Attendance at online training sessions has varied according to topic and what councillors feel most engaged with at the time. However, when comparing online attendance to in person attendance at training offered in previous years, especially in the year leading up to the Borough Elections, attendance tends to naturally trail off.
- 3.7 The 2022-23 Councillor Training Programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.8 The provision of planning training is currently under review with the Interim Head of Place, Dan Ledger. The Planning Committee Review Working Group has recommended that training is offered on a monthly basis online via MS Teams and to resume after the elections in 2023.
- 3.9 The Steering Group has been sharing training opportunities where possible with neighbouring authorities such as Waverley; however, uptake to date has been limited. Further work will be undertaken in this area to ensure that both councils, where practicable, share resources and opportunities for councillor training and development in future, particularly in respect of the more generic types of training. A reciprocal training arrangement will be set-up, particularly for the induction of new councillors following the Borough Elections in 2023.
- 3.10 The Councillor Development Steering Group have also endorsed the establishment of a formalised Executive Member Training Programme via the Leadership Academy Scheme run by the LGA. The cost currently is £1,000 per member, plus VAT, which covers three modules, one night's accommodation, course material and tuition. The modules are detailed below:

Module 1 focuses on **leading through relationships**. This module explores how councillors can develop, maintain and use relationships (both internal and external) to provide effective leadership at the political, organisational and wider community levels.

Module 2 looks at **leading innovation and change**. This module will develop councillors' ability to lead and manage complex change to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to achieve better outcomes for the community.

Module 3 explores **leading communities and place**. The focus is on helping councillors to communicate with and provide leadership to their communities and within partnerships to achieve growth and prosperity.

Modern.gov App

- 3.11 Useful documents which councillors frequently wish to access, such as claim forms can be found on the Modern.gov App. In addition a Guide to Becoming a Councillor, to be updated for the Borough Elections in 2023 can also be found on the App. Other useful information can be uploaded to the App as councillors identify as appropriate. The councillor training which has been held to date online, via MS Teams enables councillors to access the recording themselves in the chat function afterwards. In addition, Democratic Services routinely circulate a link to the training and or/briefings given the day after. If training is provided in person in the Council Chamber, a recording of the private webcast is also sent the following day to all councillors.

Preparation for Elections and 'Becoming a Councillor' in 2023

- 3.12 The main focus for the Councillor Development Steering Group now is to prepare for the forthcoming elections in May 2023. This will be promoted through the 'beacouncillor.co.uk/guildford' website, which is in the process of being updated. A Becoming a Councillor seminar for prospective candidates is to be scheduled for February 2023 and will be held in the Council Chamber. A comprehensive 'Guide to being a Councillor' similar to the Guide produced in 2019 will be revised and updated, and will include an induction programme to be held from May-July 2023 for new and re-elected councillors. The proposed induction programme will be available to give to prospective new councillors at the 'Becoming a Councillor' seminar to give them a flavour of what to expect.
- 3.13 A copy of the first draft induction programme, which will be discussed with the Steering Group at its next meeting on 3 October 2022, is attached as **Appendix 2**. Any comments or modifications to the programme suggested by the Steering Group will be reported to the Committee. It should be noted at this stage that none of the trainers have been approached to check their availability. We will seek to confirm dates with individual trainers once the Steering Group and the

Committee have had the opportunity of commenting on the proposed programme.

- 3.14 The induction programme includes some training for parish councillors on ethical standards and GDPR (data protection). We are also looking to enhance that training offer for parish councils with the inclusion of training for them on the planning process.

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, 18 councils in the South-East (outside London) have achieved accreditation.
- 3.16 Guildford achieved full accreditation under the Charter initially in 2013 and achieved reaccreditation by demonstrating that we continued to meet the standards required 2016 and 2020. Guildford Borough Council will be assessed again for re-accreditation in September 2023.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Councillors' Training and Development budget is currently £14,000 per annum. The Steering Group oversees and monitors how this is spent throughout the year. In view of the number of external trainers that we are likely to use for the proposed induction training programme for new councillors in 2023 (see the first draft programme at **Appendix 2**), as well as to account for the potential spend in providing training to Executive members, which at £1,000 per member could equate potentially to £10,000, we are currently looking to make provision in the 2023-24 draft budget for an increase in the Councillors' Training and Development budget, for that year only, to £22,000. This would represent a growth of £8,000 for the 2023-24 budget unless other budgets can be reduced to accommodate the increase. The budget for Councillor Training and Development would revert to £14,000 per annum in subsequent years.
- 4.2 Separately, the cost to the Council for assessment under the Charter for Elected Member Development is £3,750 plus VAT, which covers a three-year period, and the next payment is due in September 2023.

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. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report, although holding councillor training sessions remotely avoids the need for councillors to travel to Millmead House, thus making a marginal but positive impact on our carbon emissions.

8. Background papers

None

9. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Current councillors' training and development programme
Appendix 2: Draft Induction Programme for newly elected councillors
(May to July 2023)