

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

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Date: 22 September 2016

Councillor Training and Development Update

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 4 June 2015, and as part of the consideration of the Work Programme, the Committee discussed elements of the councillor induction programme following the May 2015 borough elections and requested the Councillor Development Steering Group to submit a 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, including the feedback from councillors in respect of the new councillors' induction programme, the ongoing training and development programme and the work being carried out in preparation for our first full reassessment under the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development, which is due to take place on 8 November 2016.

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.

Recommendation to Council (4 October 2016):

The Committee is also asked to recommend to Council:

That the revised draft Councillor Development Policy Statement, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be adopted.

Reason for Recommendation:

To recognise the importance the Council attaches to councillors' training and development.

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 and to recommend to Council the adoption of a revised Councillor Development Policy Statement.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The training and development of councillors to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enable them to effectively 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 Council's governance framework. 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.

Councillor Development Policy Statement

- 3.2 In 2010, the Council adopted a Councillor Development Policy Statement in which we made a formal statement of commitment to training, development and learning for all councillors. This commitment was amplified by the Council's status as an Investor in People and its desire to achieve accreditation under the South East Employers' Charter for Elected Member Development.
- 3.3 In June 2016, the Councillors' Development Steering Group considered a draft revised Policy Statement, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and have recommended its adoption by full Council. One key change proposed in the revised policy (see paragraph 4 (b)) is that the Councillors' Development Steering Group should report directly to this Committee, rather than to the Executive. The reason for this is a recognition that councillor training and development is an essential component of sound corporate governance.
- 3.4 The Committee will also recall that one of the recommendations arising from the Hoey Ainscough review of the Council's ethical standards arrangements, which was adopted by the Council, was that the Committee should have an input into member training programmes to ensure that the importance of the Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan' principles) is at the heart of the Council's work¹.

Councillors' Development Steering Group

- 3.5 It is essential that member development is member-led and, to that end, a small cross party steering group, currently comprising five councillors², supported by Committee Services officers, is responsible for overall co-ordination of member development at Guildford.
- 3.6 The Steering Group's current terms of reference are:

¹ Paragraph 46 of the report by Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd

² Councillor Mike Hurdle (chairman), Councillor Matt Furniss, Councillor Angela Gunning, Councillor Nigel Manning and Councillor Caroline Reeves

'To continue to develop a clear structured Action Plan for councillor development that responds to the fundamental themes that support the vision of the Corporate Plan; Our Borough, Our Economy, Our Infrastructure, Our Environment and Our Society.

To continue to support councillors in their ongoing development and training needs particularly with the introduction of new governance arrangements taking effect as of 1 January 2016.'

3.7 The Steering Group 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

New councillors' Induction Programme

3.8 Prior to the 2015 local elections, the then Steering Group put together the comprehensive new councillors' induction programme which took place from May to July 2015, see Appendix 2 to this report.

3.9 In September 2015, the Steering Group received feedback from councillors on the efficacy and organisation of the induction programme, details of which are set out in Appendix 3.

Ongoing training and development programme

3.10 As stated in paragraph 3.7 above, the Steering Group considers the ongoing training and development programme for councillors at each of its meetings. Since July 2015, the following training and development events for councillors have been held:

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
21 Sept 2015	Treasury Management Training
23 Sept 2015	Planning Committee Training: Looking at reasons for refusal and issues surrounding covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with officers in advance of Committee and contact just before committee • A revised way for Councillors to move overturns on officer recommendations. In short the chairman will adjourn the meeting before a vote is taken to allow the mover of the motion, officers and chairman to get together to ensure appropriate polices and the correct issues are identified • Appeals and costs – appeal statements • Judicial review and webcasting
4 Nov 2015	Planning Committee Training: Seven Day Notification Workshop
16 Nov 2015	Vocal Coaching
19 Nov 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Training & Skills: The National and local context of Overview and Scrutiny

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
3 Dec 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Training & Skills: Effective Work Programming and Scoping a Review
12 Jan 2016	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Session
27 Jan 2016	Planning Committee Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future role and purpose of the Design and Conservation team • Number of listed buildings and conservation areas in the borough – work of conservation character appraisals • When is listed building consent required • Touching on significance, setting, substantial and less than substantial harm • Heritage assets • The context of the above 2 bullet points with the NPPF
9 Feb 2016	Overview and Scrutiny Training & Skills: Questioning Exercise
17 Feb 2016	Planning Committee Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent revisions in planning policy towards Gypsy and Traveller sites • Very special circumstances and what these mean – how weight is attributed • Factors to consider in assessing these types of cases • Permanent and temporary consents – merits and issues for consideration
3 Mar 2016	Safeguarding Training
12 May 2016	Good Urban Design
17 May 2016	Executive Overview and Scrutiny Refresh
15 Jun 2016	Speed Reading

3.11 The current programme is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

The Charter for Elected Member Development

3.12 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.

3.13 Guildford achieved full accreditation under the Charter in September 2013, undertook an interim assessment successfully in March 2015 and is due for a full reassessment on 8 November 2016.

3.14 In order to gain re-accreditation under the Charter, the Council must demonstrate that it continues to satisfy the following four essential criteria:

- That there is a clear commitment to councillor development;
- That the Council has a strategic approach to councillor development.

- That learning and development is effective in building capacity.
- That the Council's processes support councillors in their role as leaders of their local communities.

Charter Reassessment Day – 8 November 2016

3.15 This will involve an assessment day with the South East Employers Assessment Team, councillors and key officers. Typically, the day involves interviews with:

- The Leader of the Council
- Councillors' Development Steering Group representatives
- Leaders of the minority groups on the Council
- A minimum of seven non-executive members, including at least one recently elected. This will be in workshop format
- The Managing Director
- Officer responsible for Member Development

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 The fee paid to South East Employers to cover the cost of the assessment in 2013, interim assessment in March 2015, the re-assessment in November, ongoing support and expenses was £2,500. A further fee of £2,500 will become payable in 2017-18 to cover the costs of the Charter over the next three years.

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: Draft Revised Councillor Development Policy Statement
 Appendix 2: New councillors' Induction Programme
 Appendix 3: Feedback on the Induction Programme
 Appendix 4: Current councillors' training and development programme