

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of the Director of Resources

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Councillor Training and Development Update

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 recent 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.

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 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 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 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.'

3.4 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 July 2016, the following training and development events for councillors have been held:

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
27 July and 27 Sept 16	Equality, Diversity and Respect Training (cancelled due to non-availability of trainer on both occasions).
12 Oct 16	SANGS Training – Planning Committee
3 Nov 16	Licensing Taxi Training – James Button
30 Nov 16	Practical Skills for Community Engagement – Steve Skinner LGiU (cancelled due to low uptake by members)
17 Jan 17	Equality, Diversity and Respect Training - Munira Thobani LGiU
22 Feb 17	Overview and Scrutiny Training Skills – John Cade
2 Mar 17	Viability Training – Planning Committee – Dixon Searle Partnership

¹ Councillor Colin Cross, Councillor Matt Furniss, Councillor Angela Gunning, Councillor Mike Hurdle (chairman), Councillor Mike Parsons, Councillor Dennis Paul and Councillor Iseult Roche.

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
8 Mar 17	Surrey County Highways Training – Planning Committee
20 Mar 17	Speaking Confidently at Meetings – Kevin Wilson LGiU
27 Apr 17	Practical Skills for Community Engagement – Steve Skinner LGiU
10 May 17	Planning Committee briefing on new procedures
29 Jun 17	Dealing with Difficult People – Jacqui Mansell LGiU
12 July 17	Design Training Planning Committee – Design South East
20 July 17	Media Training for Executive Members - Richard Uridge
20 July 17	Time Management and Coping Strategies – Jacqui Mansell LGiU
21 Sep 17	Understanding Treasury Management – Claire Morris

3.6 The current programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

'Becoming a Councillor' section of Guildford Borough Council website

3.7 The Steering Group agreed that we should develop a section on the Guildford Borough Council website about 'Becoming a Councillor'. A microsite has been put together, linking with local.gov.uk, which can host relevant resources and will be maintained by the LGA. The microsite has gone live on the Council's website and can be viewed here: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/20557/Becoming-a-Councillor>. The Councillor Development Steering Group will be meeting with officers from the LGA, at their next meeting in October, about how to best promote the site leading up to the next local elections in 2019.

E-Learning Modules Learningpool

3.8 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. Chairing 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

3.9 The online e-learning management system will be available for councillors to use as of 1 September 2017 for a two year period. This will be of particular value to new councillors following the elections in 2019 as well as current councillors by providing an additional learning aid. Councillors' learning can be tracked by officers so as to identify initial uptake and use of the system overall. A welcome email was sent to all councillors on 1 September 2017 with login details.

Dedicated Learning and Development section of Guildford Borough Council website

- 3.10 We are currently looking at creating a dedicated learning and development space on the Council's website that would be password protected for councillors. This would substitute the information currently available on the Loop (intranet) which, following feedback from councillors, is difficult to access.

The Charter for Elected Member Development

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 Guildford achieved full accreditation under the Charter initially in 2013, and were successfully reaccredited on 8 November 2016. We are due an 18 month interim assessment in May 2018 and a full reassessment in November 2019.
- 3.12 The most recent assessment undertaken by South East Employers on 8 November 2016, identified the following core strengths of Guildford's councillor development:
- Top political and management commitment to member development.
 - Member development working group positional leadership (group leaders/cabinet member).
 - Revised councillor development policy.
 - High quality induction / 'Be a Councillor' event – induction evaluated.
 - Political group mentoring in place 2015.
 - Commitment to Personal Development Plans (48%).
 - Learning and development programme shared and regular training sessions linked to corporate priorities.
 - Budget has been increased from £9,820 to £12,000.
- 3.13 The potential future priorities for the Councillor Development Steering Group to work towards are detailed in an Action Plan suggested by South East Employers that is attached as Appendix 2 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 The budget is likely to be over spent this financial year owing to the costs of procuring the online e-learning management system via Learning Pool. The system costs £8,000 for a two-year period, during which we will encourage councillors to use it, and at the end of that period consider whether it represents value for money.
- 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 2018.

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: Action Plan