

## MEMBER TRAINING

### Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 17 October 2017

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status For Information

Key Decision No

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Management of Council Resources**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Firth

**Contact Officer** Jim Carrington-West, Ext. 7286

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**Recommendation to** Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee:

That the report on providing a Member Training programme is considered by the committee.

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#### Introduction and Background

- 1 There is an ongoing requirement to ensure that elected Members are in possession of required knowledge and training to enable them to carry out their function in order to support the needs of the community.
- 2 There is already an amount of regular training that takes place for Members. Some elements are mandatory, including specific training for those Members that are to sit on either Development Control Committee or Licensing Committee. Other elements are designed to fit with annual processes such as finance training as part of the budget setting process each year or specific areas such as the Local Plan process.
- 3 However, it was brought to officers' attention that Members would welcome the development of a training programme specifically for their needs and therefore a survey was circulated to all Councillors in March/April 2017 asking for their views as to which areas they feel are necessary for further information or training. The survey was live for 22 days with a number of emails from the Portfolio Holder, Legal and Democratic Services and the Chief Officer Corporate Services by way of explanation.
- 4 Due to the Kent County Council elections in May, followed by the General Election in June called with short notice, the results of this work have been somewhat delayed but are brought to this committee as the earliest opportunity to feed back to Members.

## **Analysis of Survey Results**

- 5 The survey was sent to all 54 elected Members and was responded to by 38 individuals, constituting a 70% response rate. A full set of responses can be seen at Appendix A.
- 6 Of the 38 responses, the majority (89%) agreed that there should be a training programme in place for Members.
- 7 62% of Members responding requested that the training take place at the Council Offices. However, 21% of Members suggested training could be online or supplemented with other technologies such as webex and conference calling. Officers will investigate additional methods of delivery including whether training to be provided at the Council offices can be videoed and then posted online for Members.
- 8 On the question of when would be the most convenient time for Members to attend training, the results were mixed. There is a fairly even spread covering mornings and evenings. This said, given the numbers suggesting evenings would be most convenient and taking into account comments that these sessions could be added to existing scheduled meetings, this would seem a sensible and cost effective approach.
- 9 The survey then went on to ask members how likely they would be to attend training based on a number of specific areas that were organised within the current remits of each Chief Officer. The areas where a majority of respondents expressed an interest are included at Appendix B including suggestions as to which committee might be the most appropriate to host that training.

## **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

Not providing any Member training further than the regular topics that are covered each year was considered and rejected as not meeting the requirements fed back through the Member Training Survey.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

There are no adverse financial implications relating to the training programme set out in this report. All training is expected to be delivered within the current allocated member training budget. For 2017/18 this amounts to £10,000.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications.

## Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion and based on the results in Appendix A and the summary in Appendix B, it is proposed that training covering these areas is worked up and scheduled to take place as part of already scheduled committee meetings.

Any required costs to provide these sessions will be met from within the existing Member Training budget. This may include the use of external facilitators or material where necessary.

All members will be notified of the training/information sessions to be carried out. The specific timings and content of these sessions will be taken forward in conjunction with the appropriate Portfolio Holders, Chief Officers and Chairs of the relevant committees but with a view to each training session taking place no earlier than existing scheduled committee meetings. To avoid unnecessary waste of officer time, a discussion will be had with the relevant Committee Chairmen to ascertain whether training will be scheduled to take place either directly before or after committee business has been dealt with. The aim will be to standardise the length of training sessions to no more than one hour. Some essential areas of Member training will be Scheduled to take place after Full Council as is already the case.

Members are thanked for their time in contributing to this survey.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Full Member Training Survey results

Appendix B - Summary of areas of interest

## **Background Papers**

None

**Jim Carrington-West**

**Chief Officer Corporate Services**