

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 JANUARY 2020**

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT MONITORING REPORT

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Bob Deed - Leader
Responsible Officer: Sally Gabriel - Member Services Manager

Reason for Report: The action plan for the South West Charter for Member Development states that member development opportunities should be monitored.

RECOMMENDATION: That the contents of report be noted.

Financial Implications: Specific training for members is funded from the Members Training Budget.

Legal Implications: None

Risk Assessment: Poor Member Development may result in lack of engagement by members.

Equality Impact Assessment: There are no concerns with regard to equalities impact relating to the content of this report.

Impact on Climate Change: None anticipated

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This relates to the corporate governance of the Council and therefore is supporting all priorities of the Corporate Plan.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The South West Charter for Member Development was originally awarded to the Council in November 2010 following a lengthy evidence gathering exercise which also included members and senior officers attending interviews with the examining board. Reassessment to secure the Charter took place in 2014 and again in April 2017.

1.2 As a commitment to the Charter, this report will outline the work that continues to take place to address member development requirements. It will report on the sessions that have taken place since the election in May 2019 and will seek ideas for development in the future.

1.3 The opportunity arose at the end of 2017 for the Council to work with other local authorities in Devon and Somerset providing a shared service for Member Development. The shared service consists of 7 partners across Devon and Somerset and it was felt that this would widen our opportunities to provide learning and development with other local authorities in a cost effective manner offering networking opportunities and the benchmarking of good practice across the field. The programme for the current year includes:

- An introduction to Scrutiny – this unfortunately clashed with our members away day
- Charing Skills – with 11 of our own members attending alongside those from other authorities
- Questioning Skills – 4 of our own members attended from this authority alongside those from other local authorities
- Time Management and Managing Casework – this was due to take place in December but has been moved to February 2020
- Media Skills and being safe with social media – March 2020

At least 2 of the sessions will be hosted by the Member Services Manager here at Phoenix House with a view to encouraging our members to attend.

Officers from the Shared Service will also be utilised for personal development plans for Members which will be covered later in the report.

2.0 Member Development

2.1 The information set out below provides details of the training and member briefings that have taken place since the election in May as reported to the Member Development Group in November 2019:

Title of session	Detail	Number of Attendees
1st Induction (with Member Services)	New Members	16
2nd Induction (Governance, Standards, Data Protection and ICT)	New Members	14
3rd Induction (To be a Ward Member)	New Members	13
4th Induction *The Committee Member)	New Members	13
Planning Committee Day 1	Planning Committee & Substitutes	14
Planning Committee Day 2	Planning Committee & Substitutes	14
Finance	New Members	6
Scrutiny	Scrutiny Committee & Substitutes	10
PDG Training	PDG Members	8
Standards Training	Committee Members	8
Audit Committee Training	Audit Committee & Substitutes	9
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	All Members invited	9
Final Induction with the Chief Executive	New Members	9
Media Training	Cabinet Members	6
Planning for Non Committee Members	All Members invited	9
Bereavement Services	All Members invited	11

Universal Credit Update	All Members invited	17
North West Cullompton	Planning Committee & Substitutes	13
Treasury Training	All Members invited	19
Planning (highways)	Planning Committee & Substitutes	11
Away Day	All Members invited	24
Planning Workshop	Planning Committee & Substitutes	7
Licensing & Regulatory	Licensing & Regulatory Committees	11
3 Rivers	All Members invited	21
Housing Issues	All Members invited	15
Customer Services	All Members invited	8

- 2.2 Included in the table above are a wide range of learning opportunities which have been delivered to provide additional skills and knowledge as part of the induction programme for newly elected members and general sessions for all members with some linked to specific committees. The majority of these are group sessions that take place as part of the “briefing programme”, with some committee/group specific training which has been requested. Individuals have also requested specific training that is appropriate to them either in their Ward Member role or specific Council duties and these are paid for out of the Member Development budget.
- 2.3 A lot of thought went into the preparation of the induction programme and it is hoped that it provided good grounding for new members, giving them a taste of the authority’s remit and how it works. The programme was drawn up in January 2019 to coincide with the prospective councillor evenings that took place in the 3 main towns encouraging people to stand for election, it was generally felt that advertising the induction programme prior to the election may be helpful to those wishing to stand for election. The new administration changed the dynamics of the Council, with many newly elected members having a full time job which made attendance at day time sessions difficult for them. This did cause an issue for some members and has been noted for future programmes.
- 2.4 As part of our commitment to the charter, evaluation of events does take place; an email is sent to those who have attended asking a variety of questions specific to the event and always with an invitation to suggest any improvements that could be made; feedback is generally encouraging with any issues that arise being fed back to officers facilitating the sessions.
- 2.5 Informal workshops for committees and policy development groups have been well received by members. These sessions have proved to be very successful with exceptional attendance and it has been deemed that such sessions will continue on a regular basis into the new council.
- 2.6 Online acceptance of policies will continue when necessary, all of these are accessed through the Learning Hub which is available via an external link.

3.0 Member Development Group

3.1 The Member Development Group is a group of Members who work alongside Member Services Officers to promote the Members learning programme, this group is made up of 6 Members and includes Group Leaders. This joint working approach was highlighted in the feedback from the Charter reassessment in March 2014....”During the assessment visit, the assessment team found many indicators of good practice, there was clearly a cross-party political commitment to Member Development and a strong commitment from all the Councillors the team interviewed to development.....it was also clear that Members were to lead on their development”.

3.2 The newly formed Member Development Group met Monday 11 November and discussions took place regarding the work of the group, feedback from the induction programme and future activities. The following suggestions were recorded:

- The Member Development Policy be updated to include reference to a member skills audit, the need for members to know who the relevant officers were in each service and for social media training to be added to the list of development provided.
- Feedback should be captured at the end of each session by questionnaire rather than by email the following day
- A visual presentation should be added to the induction pack to provide information with regard to departments and ongoing issues on a ward by ward basis. This could include specific officers who dealt with specific ward areas.
- Officers were requested to check the ‘members diary’ held by Member Services when trying to organise meetings or visits for members.

4.0 Attendance

4.1 It was suggested earlier in the report that attendance for sessions organised to date have been quite good. Member Services started a process of reminders in the previous council, electronic appointments are circulated to Members a few weeks prior to the event to book a place in their diaries and encourage attendance; also same day reminders have been introduced which seem to have been well received, this process continues.

5.0 Future Planning

5.1 All members will be encouraged throughout the life of the council to take part in personal development planning (PDP) in which they identify the type of training they would like to take part in. Member Services officers will be working alongside the lead officer for the shared service over the next few months. This scheme has been well received in the past as it is an opportunity to discuss personal development and also to address any issues the member may have on a one to one basis with officers, this will include a skills audit.

5.2 Members of the Planning and Audit Committee require on-going training, this is organised on an adhoc basis when required.

- 5.3** A programme of development for the new year is in hand. The Scrutiny Committee may like to suggest further additions to the timetable.
- 5.4** All Members use electronic communication to some degree and the number of Members now using iPads is encouraging; Member Services continue to support Members with regard to ICT training and iPad use.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1** The new council has given the opportunity for new members to benefit from our commitment to the Member Development Charter to continue to address member development issues initially through the induction programme and the additional programme of development that has taken place. Re-elected members have been able to continue their personal development programmes of subjects that are of interest to them either personally or via committee/group membership.

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Circulation of the Report: Cabinet Member Councillor R M Deed, Leadership Team and the Member Development Group

List of Background Papers: Training records, individual evaluation forms and Member Development Group minutes.