

Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of the Director of Finance

Author: Sophie Butcher / John Armstrong

Tel: 01483 444056 / 444102

Email: sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk / john.armstrong@guildford.gov.uk

Relevant Lead Councillor: Caroline Reeves

Tel: 07803 204433

Email: caroline.reeves@guildford.gov.uk

Date: 19 September 2019

Councillor Training and Development Annual Report 2019-20

Executive Summary

As agreed previously 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, focussing on the Councillor Induction Programme which ran from May-July 2019 following the local elections and feedback received. Councillors have also been asked to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP). The information gathered from the PDP will assist the steering group in focussing on the specific training needs and requirements of all councillors and will inform the ongoing councillor development and training programme. Lastly, the report outlines the work being carried out in preparation for our next reassessment under the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development, which is due to take place in November 2019. The date will be confirmed shortly.

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.

Reason for Recommendation:

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

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 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 support councillors in their ongoing development and training needs through a clear, structured Action Plan for councillor development that responds to the fundamental themes that support the vision of the Corporate Plan: Place-making, Community and Innovation."*
- 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. The Steering Group under the previous administration agreed that a comprehensive induction programme be put together for all newly elected councillors that ran from May-July 2019. The following training and development events for councillors were held:

¹ Councillor Colin Cross (Chairman), Councillor Richard Billington, Councillor Angela Gunning, Councillor Ramsey Nagaty and Councillor Pauline Searle.

DATE	TITLE OF TRAINING
7 May 2019	Reception for newly elected Councillors
9 May 2019	ICT Overview
13 May 2019	Licensing Act 2003 Training
14 May 2019	Mock Council Meeting
16 May 2019	Planning Basics Training
23 May 2019	Effective Overview and Scrutiny Training
30 May 2019	General Data Protection Regulation Training (GDPR) for Councillors
5 June 2019	Chairing Meetings Training
6 June 2019	Planning Basics Training (repeat)
10 June 2019	Ethical Standards Training
11 June 2019	Member/Officer Relations Training
12 June 2019	Ethical Standards Training for Parish Councillors (Western Parishes)*
13 June 2019	Overview of role of Corporate Governance and Standards Committee
20 June 2019	Licensing Committee Training – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver/Vehicle/Operator Licensing
24 June 2019	Introduction to Local Government Finance
25 June 2019	Ethical Standards Training for Parish Councillors (Eastern Parishes)*
26 June 2019	Licensing Act 2003 Training (repeat)
27 June 2019	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Training for Parish Councillors *
2 July 2019	Equalities and Diversity Training
10 July 2019	Licensing Committee Training – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver/Vehicle/Operator Licensing (repeat)
15 July 2019	Effective Meetings

* Although this training was provided for parish councillors at no cost to parish councils, the turnout at each session was disappointingly low despite plenty of notice being given

3.6 Feedback received following the training sessions was overall very positive. Officers have noted that copies of the presentations should be handed out as part of the training session so that councillors have them to hand to make notes on as, on occasion, hand-outs were not provided. Some councillors had also commented that the training provided on Member/Officer Relations and Equality and Diversity was not comprehensively addressed and that further training in these areas was required. Officers will look to schedule in additional training in these areas in order to bridge any knowledge gaps.

3.7 Councillors have been asked to complete their Personal Development Plans by Friday 4 October 2019. The response rate required by South East Employers in meeting the requirements of the Charter for Elected Member Development is 60%. The Councillor Development Steering Group will tailor the ongoing councillor training programme in line with the identified training needs highlighted by councillors in their Personal Development Plan responses.

3.8 The Steering Group also continue to support the arrangement of bite-sized training prior to Planning Committee and Corporate Governance and Standards Committee meetings. This has proved to be successful in terms of

increasing attendance at such training and the Steering Group will be looking at opportunities to extend bite sized training to other committees.

- 3.9 The Steering Group is also keen to share training with other local authorities. We are looking to share Licensing Sub-Committee training with Waverley Borough Council on a date to be scheduled in October 2019 hosted by James Button. We hope to build upon such shared learning opportunities as it provides a useful platform for councillors from other authorities to network and learn from each other's experiences.
- 3.10 The 2019-20 Councillor Training Programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Dedicated Learning and Development section of Guildford Borough Council website

- 3.11 We have now created a dedicated learning and development space on the Council's website that is password protected for councillors. The site has gone live on the Council's website and can be viewed here: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/councillorspages>. Links to webcasts of training are listed here along with any learning materials such as powerpoint presentations. In addition, councillors can download copies of claim forms, find dates of forthcoming training, organisation charts as well as a list of key officer contact telephone numbers and other useful information.

Learning Pool

- 3.12 We previously used Learning Pool to provide an online training resource for councillors. The cost of the contract was £8,000 over two years. The Steering Group agreed that the large costs were prohibitive given the course materials were not updated by Learning Pool and feedback received from councillors that the site was difficult to navigate. We are currently looking into alternative online learning providers for councillor training.

The Charter for Elected Member Development

- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 Guildford achieved full accreditation under the Charter initially in 2013, and were successfully reaccredited in 2016. Guildford also successfully completed the 18 month interim assessment on 11 June 2018 and therefore demonstrated that we continue to meet the standards required of the Charter. The Council will be due to undertake another full reassessment in November 2019.
- 3.15 The potential future priorities for the Councillor Development Steering Group to work towards will be devised following the next Charter Reassessment Day.

Charter Reassessment Day – November 2019

- 3.16 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 members
- Leaders of political 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 normally £12,000 per annum and was increased to £14,000 for 2019-20 to cover the additional spend anticipated following the intensive Councillor Induction programme. The Steering Group oversees and monitors how this is spent throughout the year. We are currently within budget but may overspend slightly when incorporating all training to be scheduled for the rest of the financial year.
- 4.2 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 2021, for which separate budgetary provision has been made.

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