

	<p style="text-align: center;">Standards Committee 7 January 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Chief Operating Officer</p>
For Information	Wards Affected: ALL
<p style="text-align: center;">Review of the Member Development Programme and Members' Expenses</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Standards Committee with a summary of the Member Development Programme and information regarding the Members' Expenses Scheme.
- 1.2 This report outlines the member learning and development sessions delivered for members since December 2014, and also the upcoming quarter of the member learning and development programme (January-March 2016).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

3.0 Detail – Member Development

- 3.1 The Member Development Programme was last reviewed by this Committee on 8 December 2014; that review covered the period May 2014 to December 2014. In addition to review by members of the Standards Committee, the member learning and development programme is monitored quarterly by the Member Learning and Development Steering Group on a quarterly basis. The Steering Group is now chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.2 The Member Learning and Development Steering Group provides invaluable member and Chief Officer input into the future programme. The scope of that Group is to consider the type of training provided and attendance at the training, and consider and discuss any implications with regards maintaining high standards of conduct and good practice.

Development events January 2015 – December 2015:

3.3 A significant number of member development events have been held during the course of this calendar year. These have been delivered mostly by internal officers and partners, with some external facilitators:

- Clinical Commissioning Group – 15 January 2015
- Individual Electoral Registration – 4 February 2015
- Intermediate iPad training – 17 February 2015
- Changes to council's over-subscription criteria/Social Media Protocol – 25 February 2015
- Brent Housing Partnership – 3 March 2015
- Immigration session – 10 March 2015
- Regeneration tour of the borough (repeat) – 14 March 2015
- Consultation event Alperton school – 19 March 2015
- Challenging Prejudice – 30 March 2015
- Council's London Living Wage incentives scheme – 9 April 2015
- Special Educational Needs – 20 April 2015
- Review of Brent's Council Tax Support scheme – 27 May 2015
- Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing training – 28 May 2015
- Planning Committee training – 2 June 2015
- Scrutiny development session part one – 9 June 2015
- BHP stock investment programme – 17 June 2015
- Community Access Programme – 1 July 2015
- Mandatory Children and Young People's Safeguarding session – 15 July 2015
- Mandatory Standards and the Code of Conduct session – 21 July 2015
- Introduction to Benefits and Council Tax – 28 July 2015
- Mandatory Children and Young People's Safeguarding session (repeat) – 3 September 2015
- Licensing Policy Review consultation – 10 September 2015
- Mandatory Standards and the Code of Conduct session (repeat) – 17 September 2015
- Mandatory Children and Young People's Safeguarding session (afternoon repeat) – 3 September 2015
- Launch event: LGA 'Modern Councillor' programme – 16 November 2015
- Audit Committee development session – 19 November 2015
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – 24 November 2015
- LGA 'Modern Councillor' programme session 1: Meeting the Challenge – 3 December 2015
- 'Prevent' Ideology and Radicalisation In Depth – 22 December 2015.

Further scheduled sessions:

- LGA 'Modern Councillor' programme session 2: Community Leadership – 21 January 2016
- Social Values in Procurement session – 28 January 2016
- Scrutiny development session part two – 11 February 2016
- LGA 'Modern Councillor' programme session 3: Effective Neighbourhood and Community Engagement – 18 February 2016
- School Admissions session – 25 February 2016
- LGA 'Modern Councillor' programme session 4: Connecting with Communities: using social media effectively – 24 March 2016.

Attendance at internal training events

- 3.4 Member attendance at internal learning and development sessions has varied for each session during the current municipal year. Overall, member attendance has been encouraging. Of the 17 sessions delivered during the May-November period, 6 sessions were attended by 20 members or more; 12 sessions were attended by 10 members or more.
- 3.5 The best attended sessions were the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Children' sessions and the 'Standards and the Code of Conduct' sessions, which were mandatory. Encouragingly, the LGA 'Modern Councillor' launch event, which was not mandatory, was attended by 29 members.

Members of the Standards Committee may wish to note that the Member Learning and Development Steering Group will, in January 2016, consider the frequency and content of Councillor mandatory training.

- 3.6 The first trial of a 'breakfast' session, held at 8.00am, was well received by members as feedback demonstrated. 13 members attended this session.
- 3.7 Understandably, sessions with the lowest attendance tended to be those aimed at specific committee membership.
- 3.8 There do not appear to be any other particular trends relating to subject matter or the timing of the courses which would assist in identifying further why some members choose not to attend training sessions.
- 3.9 Currently the Member Development Programme is advertised to all members via the weekly Members' Information Bulletin. Reminders are issued on a weekly basis, also via the Members' Information Bulletin. A system of sending invites to the sessions electronically via Outlook was launched in January and feedback has been very positive.

Attendance at external events January 2015 – December 2015:

- 3.10 A number of external events have been attended by members since January 2015. The organisers have included the Local Government Association (LGA), London Councils, and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU). Programme content has included the local government finance; commissioning, procurement and contract management; licensing conferences; and the LGiU Prevent conference.

Feedback from members regarding the member development programme

- 3.11 Feedback is sought from members following each training event attended; however the use of an electronic link intended to allow members to provide information without the use of paper has not proven as successful as hoped. Levels of feedback submitted dropped dramatically, and as a result, paper copies of feedback forms have been re-introduced.

Organisational and political support

- 3.12 The Steering Group has consistently provided constructive input and evaluation during previous terms of office and it is anticipated this support will continue given the Chair of the group is now the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive attends. A strong political lead on member development from all groups is essential to ensure member ownership of the programme.

Member Development Charter Award

- 3.13 In September 2015, Brent Council became the first London Borough to achieve the 'gold standard' Charter Plus Award for Elected Member Development.
- 3.14 The Charter Plus Award is given to councils in recognition of their ongoing commitment and strategic approach to Elected Member learning and development. The assessment featured a rigorous paper-based process and the assessors met a number of councillors and key officers involved in Elected Member learning and development.
- 3.15 Members of the assessment panel commended examples of learning and development on offer to Brent councillors including:
- a tailored programme of sessions to support members in their role as a 'modern councillor' with topics including effective engagement with communities and neighbourhoods, use of social media, influencing skills, facilitation and conflict resolution, and providing strong community leadership;

- sessions designed to further develop relationships with partner agencies, including CVS Brent, Veolia, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Brent Housing Partnership;
 - sessions promoting the well being and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 3.16 The assessment team was made up of Cllr Darren Rowell, Leader of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Ann Moore, Head of Democratic Services and Registrars at Bracknell Forest Council, and Mark Palmer, Development Director, South East Employers.
- 3.14 Feedback from the Charter assessors indicated that Brent stands out as an excellent performer in the field of member development.
- 3.15 The full assessment report is attached for information at Appendix A.

4.0 Detail – Members’ Expenses

- 4.1 Changes to the Members’ Allowances Scheme were agreed at the meeting of Full Council in September 2014 and included the provision for members to claim a Dependent Carer’s Allowance. To date, no payment has been made.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs of the member learning and development programme are met from a budget of £17,352 annually and have included the services of an external consultant to deliver the Members’ Needs Analysis (MNA) project.
- 5.2 A package of LGA member development sessions tailored exclusively to the requirements of Brent councillors has been purchased and will be delivered during the remainder of the current municipal year, however the costs will be met from the wider Executive and Member Services.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 None for the Member Development Programme.
- 6.2 The Local Government (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, requires the council to have the records available for public inspection. During the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 no member of the public came to inspect the records.

7.0 Diversity Implications

7.1 This report contains no specific diversity implications.

For further information please contact:

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