



## **Audit Advisory Committee**

20 September 2017

### **Report from the Director, Performance Policy & Partnerships**

For Information

Wards Affected: ALL

## **Review of the Member Learning and Development Programme**

### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Audit Advisory Committee with a summary of the Member Development Programme. A similar report has been considered by the Standards Committee.
- 1.2 This report outlines the member learning and development sessions delivered for members since May 2016, as well as the current quarter of the member learning and development programme (June to December 2017).
- 1.3 The report also provides an outline of the Member induction programme to be delivered following the May 2018 Local Elections.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

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

### **3.0 Detail – Member Development**

- 3.1 In addition to annual review by members of the Standards Committee, the member learning and development programme is monitored quarterly by the Member Learning and Development Steering Group which is 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 the Group is to consider the type of training provided and review attendance at the sessions, and consider any requests and suggestions for training from Members.

## **Member Learning and Development Sessions delivered May 2016 – July 2017:**

- 3.3 A significant number of member development sessions have been held during the course of this municipal year.
- 3.4 These have been delivered mostly by internal officers and partners, with some external facilitators:
- Alcohol & Entertainment Licensing Committee Training - 23 May 2016
  - Effective Scrutiny - 26 May 2016
  - Viability, Section 106 and CIL: Councillor Involvement in pre-applications - 28 May 2016
  - Ensuring Effective Meetings - 09 June 2016
  - Personal Health & Safety Training for Councillors - 30 June 2016
  
  - Standards and the Code of Conduct - 26 July 2016
  - Influencing Workshop - 28 July 2016
  - Mandatory Training for Planning Committee Members & Substitutes - 30 August 2016
  - Managing Conflict as a Councillor - 08 September 2016
  - Housing Strategy & Development Seminar - 15 September 2016
  
  - Sustainability and Transformation Plan Session (STP) - 4 October 2016
  - Scrutiny Training (Modern.gov) - 11 October 2016
  - Housing management Options for Council Tenants and Leaseholders - 17 October 2016
  - Customer Promise - 25 October 2016
  - Social Media - 'Getting the most out of social media' - 10 November 2016
  - Private Rented Sector Licensing - 22 November 2016
  - Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee Mandatory training - 1 December 2016
  - Corporate Parents and safeguarding children and young people - 13 December 2016
  - FIDA - In Depth Ideology Training for Councillors - 12 January 2017
  - High Streets Strategy - 19 January 2017
  - Safeguarding Adults Board - 25 January 2017
  - Group's first session: Social Value Advisory Group - 31 January 2017
  
  - Member Informal briefing session on Virtual Permit Demo. - 6 February
  - Working effectively with officers to deliver services for residents (LGA) - 9 February 2017
  - Controlled Drinking Zone and Licensing Policy - 21 February 2017
  - Brent's Local Plan Visioning Exercise - 7 March 2017
  - Social media training for Cabinet Members - 9 March 2017
  - Development Management Policies - 20 March 2017
  - Health and Wellbeing Board - Prevention Matters Seminar - 25 March

2017

- Highways Maintenance - 29 March 2017
- The Brent Air Quality Action Plan: 2017 – 2022 - 19 April 2017
- Planning Committee Training - Mandatory - 23 May 2017
- Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing training for Committee Members - Mandatory - 24 May 2017
- Scrutiny Induction - 25 May 2017
- Planning and Affordable Housing - 13 June 2017
- Audit Committee and the Audit Advisory Committee - Mandatory training – 19 June 2017
- Spending the Neighbourhood Portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - 13 July 2017
- Mayor's Transport Strategy – 1 August 2017
- Fire safety in Brent - 20 June 2017 and 3 July 2017

**Further scheduled sessions:**

- Street Drinking to cover PSPOs and Licensing – tbc October 2017
- CCTV, Met Patrol Plus, Safer Brent, 20 November 2017
- Welfare Reform – Universal Credit and Housing Benefit changes – November 2017
- Welfare Reform – Universal Credit and Housing Benefit changes – December 2017
- Safeguarding Children and Young People – 7 December 2017

**Attendance at internal training events**

- 3.5 Member attendance at internal learning and development sessions has varied for each session during the current municipal year.
- 3.6 Overall, member attendance has been encouraging. Of the **37** sessions delivered during the May 2016 to August| 2017 period, **8** sessions were attended by **15** members or more; **12** sessions were attended by 10 members or more.
- 3.7 The most attended sessions were the 'Effective Scrutiny' and the 'Virtual Permit Demo' sessions. Encouragingly, the LGA 'Working Effectively with Officers to Deliver Services for Residents, which was not mandatory, was attended by 20 members.
- 3.8 The first trial of a 'Saturday' session, held from 9:15am to 3:30pm, was well received by members as feedback demonstrated. 17 members attended this session.
- 3.9 Understandably, sessions with the lowest attendance tended to be those aimed at specific committee membership.
- 3.10 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.

- 3.11 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, text message and email. A system of sending reminders to the sessions via text message was launched in February 2017 and feedback has been very positive.

**Attendance at external events May 2016 – May 2017:**

- 3.12 Since May 2016, Members have attended a number of external events delivered by organisations including the Local Government Association (LGA), London Councils, and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU).
- 3.13 Programme content has included the CfPS Annual Conference, BAME Councillors Development Weekender, Devolution and Economic Growth in London Seminar and Leadership Essentials - Counter Extremism. The Member Learning and Development working group considers all attendance at external sessions.

**Mentoring**

- 3.14 The LGA has been providing mentors with relevant skills and experience to deliver 1:1 mentoring support to a number of members during this period.  
12 elected Members have now taken advantage of this opportunity. The individual mentoring sessions been well received.

**Development support for the 'Top Team'**

- 3.15 The LGA has delivered two sessions to support the council's 'Top Team' (i.e. Cabinet and Corporate Management Team) to develop their effectiveness in their strategic leadership of the council to deliver its vision and strategic priorities.
- 3.16 The sessions were delivered in July and September 2016 by LGA Associate Mhairi Cameron and Cllr Sir Steve Houghton, Leader of Barnsley MBC.

**Public Speaking**

- 3.17 In response to requests from a number of Councillors, the Member Learning and Development Working Group agreed to offer an LGA run Councillor Public Speaking Course in March 2017. This was offered to all Members.

The purpose of the course was to improve Members' ability to present and communicate more effectively and dynamically.

The course comprised different exercises for Members to discover more

about what works and what could be improved in their ability to present.

14 Members signed up for the public speaking course. This course was delivered over two days, followed by a 1-1 session for each Member with the trainer. The feedback received from Members after the course was positive.

### **Feedback from members regarding the member development programme**

- 3.18 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.
- 3.19 Levels of feedback submitted dropped dramatically, and as a result, paper copies of feedback forms have now been re-introduced.

### **Organisational and political support**

- 3.20 The Member Learning and Development 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**

- 3.21 The Council received a Charter Plus Assessment Interim visit on 18 October 2016. The assessor confirmed that Brent Council continues to meet the standard of the London Charter Plus for Elected Member Development.
- 3.22 The assessor confirmed that the Council continues to have a strong strategic commitment to member development that the Council has responded to the recommendations following the September 2015 assessment and has also moved forward with a comprehensive member development programme.
- 3.23 The assessment noted that :
- The Council has a comprehensive member development programme that consists of high quality external facilitators and a particular focus on community leadership and neighbourhood engagement;
  - The Council has positively embraced and taken forward the recommendations highlighted in the Members Needs Analysis Report 2014;
  - Members have embraced the opportunity provided through the mentoring programme and many external Member mentors are in place to support Lead Members and Committee Chairs.

3.24 The assessor suggested several areas for improvement:

- The council should have a process in place to review PDPs mid-term and to set new individual development priorities for councillors.
- The development of Community Action Groups.
- Continues to support and build on, leadership development both for Cabinet members and for all councillors as community leaders.
- Continue to seek opportunities to learn from good practice from other authorities and external organisations.

### **Member Needs Analysis Development Programme**

3.25 Brent Council provided all Members with the opportunity to undertake a refresh of the Member Needs Analysis Development Plan that was initially undertaken in September - October 2014. In addition to the refresh, Councillors who had been able to engage in the programme were invited to participate.

The approach undertaken was based on a structured one to one discussion and the completion of a Member Needs Analysis Development Plan, the purpose being to support each Councillor to identify what information and development they required to effectively continue to fulfil their role as a Brent Councillor.

The one to one discussion and questionnaire was confidential and informed the key findings and recommendations within this summary report.

## **4.0 Induction Programme 2018**

4.1 A prospective candidate event will take place on Saturday 14 October 2017 for prospective candidates in the May 2018 Local Elections. This session will focus on the practicalities of being a councillor at Brent. Candidates will hear about what it's like to be an Elected Member and what support mechanisms are in place once elected.

4.2 Sessions will cover:

- An overview and an introduction to the Local Government landscape including: About Brent Council, Local Government including structure and responsibilities, budget, composition of the council, cabinet, scrutiny;
- The role of a Councillor - introduction to the role and duties of all members, specific member roles, code of conduct;
- Council elections 2018 - Election timescales, induction, further information.

4.3 A brief introductory pack will be sent to all prospective councillors in early 2018. This pack will include the outline draft induction programme and a link to the 'Be a Councillor' page from the LGA website.

- 4.4 We are planning to launch the comprehensive induction for new and returning Members on Monday, 21 May 2018. In addition to the comprehensive mandatory training programme, role specific training and I.T induction will take place soon after the local elections in May and during June 2018.
- 4.5 Following the success of the 2014 programme, we will be following the same model. The Member Learning and Development working group will steer the induction programme, designing it for Members.

## **5.0 Diversity Implications**

This report contains no specific diversity implications

### **Contact Officer**

Thomas Cattermole  
Head of Executive and Member Services  
thomas.cattermole@brent.gov.uk  
020 8937 5446

*PETER GADSDON*  
DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS