
Proposed Member Development Programme 2017/18

Committee considering report: Council on 8 December 2016

Portfolio Member: Councillor James Fredrickson

Date Portfolio Member agreed report: 16 November 2016

Report Author: Jude Thomas

Forward Plan Ref: C3097

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To agree the proposed Member Development Programme for 2017/18.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to discuss and, if appropriate, agree the proposed Member Development Programme for 2017/18.

3. Implications

3.1 **Financial:** The Member Development Programme will be delivered within the existing budget.

3.2 **Policy:** N/A

3.3 **Personnel:** N/A

3.4 **Legal:** N/A

3.5 **Risk Management:** N/A

3.6 **Property:** N/A

3.7 **Other:** N/A

4. Other options considered

Not to run a Member Development Programme

5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 The Member Development Group initially met on 21 September 2016 and gave consideration to the Member Development Programme for the 2017/18 Municipal Year. Following initial consultation, the Member Development Group met again on 23 November 2016 to update and finalise the draft programme.
- 5.2 To ensure that the programme for 2017/18 addresses the issues that are of most interest and use, Members, Corporate Directors and Heads of Service had been canvassed for suggestions as to what should be included. All proposals were given full consideration.
- 5.3 The Member Development Group agreed to continue with the three tier programme for 2017/18 which included mandatory, strategic (linked to the Council's priorities) and specialist subjects. The proposed programme has been populated with these topics, together with the suggestions received from Members and Heads of Service. See Appendix A.
- 5.4 The start time for evening sessions was moved to 7:00pm from 6:00pm for the current programme, in response to requests from Members that found the earlier start time an obstacle to attendance. It was agreed that the impact on attendance of the new time would be reviewed at the end of the programme and the start time adjusted, if appropriate. Some Members that have previously been unable to attend the sessions due to the 6:00pm start time, have attended within the current year's programme, whilst others have found the start time too late. With this in mind, the Member Development Group proposes amending the start time from 7:00pm to 6:30pm. In the main, an earlier 2:00pm session is also scheduled.
- 5.5 Mindful of the demands upon Members' time, the Member Development Group is continually exploring additional ways of delivering the training, in order to make it more accessible to Members.
- 5.6 With this in mind, the use of webcasting for some sessions to allow them to be viewed remotely is also being explored. The Policy & Finance Update session held on 23 November 2016, was webcast to four Members, as a pilot. At the time of writing the report, Members and presenters have not had the opportunity to provide detailed feedback but initial comments have been received. Feedback is mixed, but would suggest that it is worth developing further. As a result, further sessions will be piloted and specific sessions within the programme have been identified for possible webcasting, subject to the pilot. Whilst webcasting removes the disadvantages of travel for geographically remote Members, there is some concern about the impact live-streaming will have on the quality of discussion and debate within the more interactive/workshop style of session, favoured by Members. The impact on officer time should also be noted. A short session on the technicalities of webcasting will be organised for Members immediately before the June Council meeting.
- 5.7 Further to the contents of the draft programme, an additional, more strategic discussion session, The Future of Transport in West Berkshire, has been proposed and will be confirmed upon the decision of Council.
- 5.8 Officers are also exploring other options such as video-conferencing, on-line training, instant messaging and Skype to complement and enhance the current format of the Member Development Programme and further training on the how to

get the best from the tablets will be offered in the new year. It is hoped that this will encourage greater use and maximise the potential of the tablets.

5.9 It is also proposed that e-learning sessions be re-launched.

5.10 As is existing practice, the presentations from all sessions will be published on the intranet after the repeat session.

6. Conclusion

6.1 In order to ensure that all Members are fully briefed on the diverse activities, responsibilities and pressures on the Council, and in order to best undertake their roles as elected Councillors, Members are encouraged to adopt the proposed programme and make every effort to attend all sessions.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A - Proposed Member Development Programme 2017/18

7.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment