



## **Member Development Group**

**Monday, 25 September 2023**

### **Councillors' Training - Update**

## **Report of the Service Manager – Corporate Services**

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. Contained within the Terms of Reference for Member Development Group are the following specified roles:
  - Creating an environment that encourages self-development and continuous learning
  - Identifying, delivering and evaluating learning and development opportunities for all Councillors.
- 1.2. This Training Update is brought before the Group to inform members of the current position in regard to Councillor Learning and Development (training) and prompt discussion about the training of Councillors both now and in the future.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Member Development Group:

- a) Discuss the information provided by officers in relation to Councillor Learning and Development
- b) Suggest any actions or ideas they may have in relation to Councillor Learning and Development.
- c) Consider undertaking action to encourage Councillors to attend training sessions.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. Learning and Development is an essential part of being a Councillor. The Member Development Group has been set up to advise and direct Councillor Learning and Development and has agreed to receive regular updates about this matter.

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. The 2023/24 Councillor Training Programme kicked off immediately after the 2023 Councillor Induction in May 2023. The Programme has so far delivered 12 events. These are summarised below for information and discussion.

#### Planning for Ward Councillors – 18 and 30 May

- Attended by twenty-seven Councillors over two sessions
- Delivered by officers from the Planning and Growth team
- Feedback provided by six councillors; five were satisfied with the training, one would have like more practical, hands-on assistance using the Planning Portal online
- Councillors would like further training on s106 and CIL.

#### Planning for Committee Members – 1 and 7 June

- Attended by thirty-eight Councillors over two sessions
- Delivered by officers from the Planning and Growth team
- Feedback provided by seven councillors; all were satisfied or very satisfied with the event; specific comments included professionally presented, well-structured, provided a good understanding of different roles, mock planning committee excellent
- Councillors would like further training on how applications fit with neighbourhood planning policy

#### GDPR and Cyber Security – 15 June

- Attended by six Councillors
- Delivered by the Council's Chief Information Officer and Head of ICT
- Feedback was received from four Councillors with all being satisfied with the event; one commented that a potentially dull subject had been made interesting with real life examples

#### Scrutiny Skills – 13 and 19 June

- Attended by twenty-three Councillors over two sessions
- Delivered by the Service Manager – Corporate Services
- No feedback was received from Councillors

#### Additional Planning training delivered via MSTeams – 21 June

- Attended by four Councillors
- Delivered by Delivered by officers from the Planning and Growth team
- No feedback was received from Councillors

#### Capital and Investments – 21 June

- Attended by twenty-two Councillors
- Delivered by officers from the Financial Services team
- Feedback received from one Councillor who was satisfied and reported the training as being short and to the point

#### Motions Training – 27 June

- Attended by sixteen Councillors
- Delivered by the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
- Feedback received from three Councillors who were all satisfied or very satisfied and they found the session relaxed and engaging

#### Getting Tough – 17 July

- Attended by twenty councillors
- Delivered by officers from Planning and Growth and Environmental Health
- One councillor provided feedback which was positive, commended the length Q&A session but suggested that some practical examples or case studies would have provided further insight.

Planning Issues within the Greenbelt delivered via MSTeams – 26 July

- Attended by seventeen Councillors
  - Delivered by officers from the Planning and Growth team
  - Four councillors provided feedback – one was satisfied and three were not. One provided feedback that the session was disrupted by a small number of councillors with very political views. Two suggested that the session could have been improved by the presentation of the topic from a councillor’s perspective. Further feedback suggested that this session would have been more effective if run in-person rather than virtually.
- 4.2. In addition, two Councillors attended an East Midlands Councils run event focusing on Chairing Skills in July 2023.
- 4.3. Mandatory training is required before taking up a seat on five of the Council’s Committees. At the time of reporting, all eleven members of the Planning Committee have received planning training this year, and an additional twenty-eight councillors are sufficiently trained to act as substitutes. Training for Licensing Committee members and members of the Standards Committee take place in September and November respectively. Training for members of the Appointments Committee and Employment Appeals Committee will take place prior to these committees being needed.
- 4.4. Events still to be delivered on the Training Programme for 2023/24 include:
- Understanding Local Government Finance – 7 September, 6pm [at the time of writing]
  - Understanding Licensing Committee – 18 September, 6pm
  - Risk Management Training – 28 September, 6pm
  - Understanding CIL and S106 agreements – 11 October, 6pm
  - Understanding Emergency Planning – 18 October, 6pm.
  - Understanding Standards Committee – 29 November, 6pm
- 4.5. Anecdotal feedback would indicate that a further session on GDPR and Cyber Security would be welcomed, as would a more focused session for Scrutiny Group Chairs.
- 4.6. Specific sessions well received in previous years have included the following:
- Getting started with E-Learning – previously delivered by officers
  - Personal Resilience – previously delivered by Nelson Training
  - Effective Public Speaking – previously delivered by Nelson Training
  - Media Training – previously delivered by The Media Group
  - Climate Change – previously delivered by Climate Fresk
  - Defib and CPR training – previously delivered by Trent First Responders

- Code of Conduct training – previously delivered by Governance Training and Consultancy Ltd.
- 4.7. Councillors can also access the Council's e-learning modules. There are six essential and eleven discretionary modules. From October 2023, Councillors will receive an email focusing on a specific e-learning course that should be completed within the next six weeks. Courses generally take between 20-30minutes to complete. A summary of e-learning completion rates will be provided at the next meeting of the Member Development Group.
  - 4.8. Individual learning records are kept for Councillors. These are available on request from Democratic Services either by individuals or Group Leaders.
  - 4.9. Training attendance has been problematic in the past and as a consequence is closely monitored. The percentage of expected Councillors attending in-person training events this municipal year currently stands at 58% which is higher than it has been in the past. However, there are pockets of non-attendance: two Councillors have attended no training, four Councillors have only attended one training session, three Councillors have attended two training sessions and five Councillors have only attended three training sessions. Of these Councillors, three are new Councillors and eleven are returning Councillors. They span both political groups and independent seats. Training not only assists Councillors to develop in their roles, but helps protect them as individuals, the Council and ultimately residents, so they can undertake their roles to the best of their ability.
  - 4.10. Whilst e-learning modeules are openly available, the requirement to complete essential modules has not yet been activated. This will be reported upon at the next meeting.
  - 4.11. The Councillors Training Budget stands at £8,000 for 2023/24 and drops to £5,000 in 2024/25. Current expenditure for 2023/24 stands at £650. This is mainly because the majority of training sessions have been provided internally at this point in the year by officers rather than needing to bring in external trainers.

**Questions to prompt discussion:**

- 4.12. Member Development Group is asked to consider:
  - Has the training that has already been delivered met the needs of Councillors and been well received?
  - Are there any improvements that could be made to the training that has already taken place?
  - Has the training that has already taken place identified any areas for future or further training?
  - Is the Group aware of any additional training needs that the current programme fails to meet that could be investigated for inclusion on the 2024/25 programme?

- Are there any concerns about training attendance and if so what action would the Group like to take?

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Charlotte Caven-Atack Service Manager - Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148278 ccaven-atack@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	<a href="#">Councillors Learning and Development Policy</a> – July 2021
<b>List of appendices:</b>	