

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 14 September 2016	Meeting Name: Audit, governance and standards committee
Report title:		Member training summary 2015-16	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Claire Stanhope, Learning and Development Manager, Transformation Team	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the report be noted and members invited to comment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In 2009 the council was awarded charter status for elected members (the first London authority to do so), and has committed to a process of continuous development for elected members.
3. The charter and its underpinning good practice guidelines required the council to put in place an action plan based on the following principles:
 - Being fully committed to developing elected members in order to achieve the council's aims and objectives
 - Adopting a member-led strategic approach to elected member development
 - Having a member development learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference that development activities will make
 - Seeing that learning and development is effective in building capacity
 - Addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship.
4. Training needs should support members achieve the six core competencies in the political skills framework of local leadership as identified by the Local Government Improvement and Development body (LGID). These are:
 - Local leadership
 - Partnership working
 - Communication skills
 - Political understanding
 - Scrutiny and challenge

- Regulation and monitoring.
5. Specific member training needs are identified and met in a number of ways:
- Through newly elected members and those who have new roles
 - Members undertaking 1-2-1 meetings with their respective party group whip to identify training needs and develop a personal development plan (PDP); the group whip approves training, which helps manage training budgets, controls quality and value for money
 - Members that take on a new role are invited to attend a meeting with officers to identify other training needs associated with their new role
 - Officers identify important legislative and service changes or issues; where possible, training on these changes or issue is delivered as a workshop by specialist officers
 - Members seek approval from party group whips to attend specific conferences
 - Officers sometimes circulate external training opportunities and Members respond if they are interested
 - Wherever possible, identified training is delivered by officers with specialist knowledge or expertise, such as in licensing or planning matters.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The role of party group whips has been essential in controlling and shaping member development. It is highly recommended that this continues.
7. Learning and development needs in the council are changing rapidly and it is important that member training is modern too. There are specific areas that will require reviewing, so that member development has maximum effect and relevance to a new landscape:
- What are the future training needs likely to be?
 - Digital skills: Considering how residents and officers will be communicating more digitally, what will be the digital training needs? How could members be supported in helping residents to access council services?
 - Social media is becoming increasingly common and there are pitfalls to this if not properly understood. Should this become a core component of member training?
 - Does the wider political landscape impact on the learning and development needs of Southwark members?
 - E-learning is becoming a much more convenient, cheap and effective means to learn. The council is adopting more e-courses for officers and there is a wealth of free resources available online externally to gain new skills and

knowledge. What should be most suitable for e-learning and what skills will be needed for individuals to maximise e-learning?

- The impact of member development on the work of the local authority and the wider community
- The need to promote local democracy and make better links between the tiers of local government.

Summary of 2015-16

8. A number of themes were identified, developed and delivered:

- Universal credit (UC) training was considered mandatory, and any members who hadn't yet attended UC training were required to do so; these briefing sessions were delivered by officers in exchequer services
- To check that all members have a PDP
- That all members have a My Learning Source account; this is required to access e-learning courses such as safeguarding, freedom of information, disabilities awareness and data protection awareness
- Newly elected members would receive comprehensive inductions, customised for each newly elected member; standard modules would be code of conduct, finance and members casework
- New portfolio holders would receive training on chairing skills
- Dementia Friends Champions training; these were bespoke workshops run by the Alzheimer's society to help members understand what it is like to live with dementia and the actions that they can take in their community
- Understanding domestic violence; Solace women's aid delivered a number of workshops specifically tailored for members to share good practice in working with victims and survivor relationships
- Regulatory panel training; this is for members on planning and licensing panels, and is statutory and all new members on regulatory panels are trained.

Analysis and findings

9. A total of 29 training events took place in 2015-16. The average attendance at each was 9 members.
10. Positive member feedback indicated that training delivered was well received.
11. The total spend on the member training budget was £14,131. Of this £3,120 was spent on conferences.
12. Several free sessions were conducted by charities and officers.

Member induction 2018

13. A working group of senior officers are planning for the induction of members following the local election in May 2018. The group is working to develop a detailed training and development strategy for members which links to the council plan's 'Fit for the Future' agenda and digital strategy.
14. The move towards a digital council and more digital engagement with our communities will bring with it different training and development needs for our members. A revised training and induction plan for members will include the following elements:
 - An up to date IT offer to correspond with the council's digital way of working and members' varied work styles
 - The networked councillor, helping members engage with their constituents on-line
 - The digital cities agenda, considering how the council ensures the entire borough is connected to superfast broadband.
15. To deliver this ambitious and innovative training programme for members in the future and to ensure the council achieves best value and efficiencies in the delivery of member training a review of the administration of the member training budget is required.
16. There will be a further, more detailed report to audit, governance and standards committee in November 2016 detailing the work streams contained within the digital governance and engagement project.

Policy implications

17. This report is not considered to have direct policy implications.

Community impact statement

18. This report is not considered to have direct impact on local people and communities.

Resource implications

19. This report is not considered to have direct impact on resource implications.

Consultation

20. Consultation has not been undertaken.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

21. None required.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None.		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None.	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Claire Stanhope, Learning and Development Manager		
Report Author	Claire Stanhope, Learning and Development Manager		
Version	Final		
Dated	5 September 2016		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy		No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
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