

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANNUAL COUNCIL – 22 MAY 2023
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE)

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report of the Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) providing a brief overview of Member Development which had taken place during the previous municipal year, whilst looking ahead to the forthcoming year and the programme to be approved.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the Member Development Annual Report.
- 2.2 To note the training sessions held and the need to evaluate the effectiveness of virtual meetings and use of virtual platforms to deliver Member training sessions.
- 2.3 To note the objectives as being to assist Members in carrying out their roles efficiently, and to maintain the highest standard of elected Members in carrying out their responsibilities to the Council and the communities they serve.

3 EXPLANATION

- 3.1 Member Development is considered to be essential in providing support, knowledge and guidance to Members, both new and experienced.
- 3.2 A number of training sessions are mandatory for all Members, whilst others are mandatory for those Members joining certain technical committees (such as planning and licensing).
- 3.3 Member Development is overseen by the Member Development Steering Group. The Group is comprised of 4 Councillors, a chair and a member from each political group. It is envisaged that the Group will meet four times during the year 2023-2024.

Member Development Programme 2022/23

- 3.4 Borough Council elections were held in May 2022 and nine new Members were elected. An induction programme was provided for these new Members, as well as mandatory training for all Members covering the Council Code of Conduct, and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)/ Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). Specific mandatory training for new Committee Members was also arranged covering Planning, and Licensing (including Hackney Carriages)
- 3.5 Further sessions were held throughout the year: these included Member Briefing sessions, which had been arranged in response to events as they occurred.
- 3.6 A full list of dates and sessions are contained in the table below.

2022/23 Member Development Sessions and Briefings

| Date | Session | Attendance |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 10 May 2022 | Induction | 11 |
| 11 May 2022 | Council Code of Conduct | 18 |
| 17 May 2022 | GDPR/DPA, Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act, and Freedom of Information/Environmental Information requests. | 15 |
| 25 May 2022 | Licensing and Hackney Carriage | 20 |
| 8 June 2022 | Development Management Committee (Planning) Code of Conduct | 24 |
| 5 July 2022 | Licensing and Hackney Carriage (repeated) | 1 |
| 18 July 2022 | Housing Compliance | 20 |
| 3 August 2022 | Hertfordshire Independent Living Services | 12 |
| 4 August 2022 | Parking restrictions | 14 |
| 1 September 2022 | Social Media training | 16 |
| 5 October 2022 | Housing allocations, options, and development | 23 |
| 28 February 2023 | Housing white papers | 21 |

- 3.7 The Member Development Steering Group were pleased with the Member Development programme 2022/23.
- 3.8 There were 12 Member Development sessions held in 2022/23 with an average attendance of 18 Councillors a session. 6 were statutory training sessions, 3 sessions related to housing, 1 session related to parking, 1 session related to social media, and 1 was provided by HCC relating to the Hertfordshire Independent Living Services. Overall feedback was good for all sessions. 3 sessions were externally provided, and 9 were provided internally.
- 3.9 16 Local Government Association and East of England Local Government Association training opportunities were circulated to the members throughout the

year. A majority of these opportunities were free, and the Member Development Steering Group noted these opportunities were useful for new members.

- 3.10 The Member Development Programme 2022/23 also saw the introduction of internally provided training sessions being recorded for future use by members. It should be noted that there is not a record of members who retroactively watch the recording of the session afterwards, and therefore they are not record as having received the training.

Member Development Programme 2023/24

- 3.11 Given current budgetary realities the objective will be to ensure Member Development is delivered in a cost effective manner. This includes fully utilising the Member Information Hubs to share relevant information, working collaboratively with neighbouring councils and public authorities and being proactive in sign posting Members to good, free to access and low cost development resources provided by groups such as the Local Government Association and Association of Democratic Services Officers. The council will also look to utilise internal expertise to deliver training sessions where appropriate.
- 3.12 The initial Member Development Programme for 2023/24 is set out in the table below. Further sessions and briefings are being considered and will be taken to the Member Development Steering Group for agreement.

| Session | Date |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Member induction | 10 May 2023 |
| Licensing and Hackney Carriage | 11 May 2023 |
| GDPR/DPA, Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act 2000, and Freedom of Information Act 2000 / Environmental Information regulations 2004. | 16 May 2023 |
| Council Code of Conduct | 18 May 2023 |
| Development Management Committee (Planning) Code of Conduct | 30 May 2023 |

- 3.13 Once the programme is agreed and individual sessions have been arranged, details will be shared with all Members.
- 3.14 A new procedure will be introduced to record information on how many members retroactively receive member development training from recorded sessions. This will allow the MDSG to evaluate the effectiveness of recording sessions for retroactive training.
- 3.15 In 2011 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development. The award, which lasted for three years, was a national standard developed by the East of England Local Government Association and

involved a rigorous assessment of the Council's training and development programme to ensure it met the needs of the community. The Member Development Steering Group will revisit the Charter and current application.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

4.1 This report is for information and noting only and there are no legal implications arising.

5 Financial Implication(s)

5.1 This report is for information only and there are no financial implications arising. However, Members should note the objective to continue to utilise cost effective Member development tools given budget realities.

6 Financial Implication(s)

6.1 This report is for information only and there are no risk management implications arising. However, failure to deliver mandatory training would create a compliance risk and/or prevent Members carrying out their duties effectively.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s):

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s):

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s):

9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report. However Members should note the intention to continue with providing training sessions remotely in part to avoid the associated carbon impact of travel to and from in person training sessions.

10 Human Resources Implication(s):

10.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s):

11.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

12 Communications and Engagement Implication(s):

12.1 This report is for information only and there are no wider communication implications.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities:

13.1 This report is linked to all of the council's corporate priorities, increasing the effectiveness of Members to affect change, scrutinise performances and ensure the Council fulfils its duties.

14 Equality and Diversity:

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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| Date | 20 April 2023 |