

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21 UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the current work of the Members' Development Task and Finish (T&F) Group on revising the Members' Development Programme that includes meeting the corporate and individual learning and development needs of members.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and to make any further suggestions for the Task and Finish Group to consider as part of the review of the Members' Development Programme.

3 Background and Supporting Information

3.1 Context

The Council is committed to supporting members to carry out their different responsibilities and recognises the need to provide learning and development opportunities to help members undertake these. The new Members' Development Task & Finish group has been set up to develop a structured plan for members' development in response to the Council's corporate priorities to deliver 'Our Futures' transformation and to meet members' individual learning needs.

3.2 Members' Development Task & Finish (T&F) Group

Members' development is more effective when it is member-led. To that end, Cllr Sabia Akram (Deputy Council Leader and Portfolio Holder) and the Cabinet propose to set up a small cross party **T&F** group with three councillors supported by two senior officers with responsibility for overall co-ordination of members' development at Slough Council. The **T&F** group will be supported by the Council's Organisational Development Officer (Members' Development Lead) from the People Service.

3.2.1 The **proposed terms of reference** for the **Task & Finish Group's** were expanded at the inaugural meeting of the group to include the following (this shown in bold to the original text):

- (a) First amendment is additional sentence at end of the first bullet:
- Develop and implement an effective Members' development strategy and programme to ensure that members are confident in their public roles for the benefit of Slough residents. **Within this to recognise the experiences of Members in their role and to tailor the development accordingly.**
- (b) Second amendment is addition of a new bullet:
- **To ensure the work programme is aligned to the new ways of delivering training that includes a blend of classroom based sessions, interactive training, social and online methods such as e-learning modules, webinars, video and audio programmes.**

For transparency the original Terms of Reference are cited below:

- Develop and implement an effective members' development strategy and programme to ensure that members are confident in their public roles for the benefit of Slough residents.
- Review the current Members' Performance Review Framework to ensure that all members have regular dialogue with the Council/Party Leader to discuss their continuing professional development needs.
- Review the procedure for member development expenditure for learning events to ensure best use of resources (both financial and human) and equity across the membership.
- Monitor attendances at development activities/events – consider actions against individual members where this may be unsatisfactory, including disciplinary measures.

3.2.2 The **Members' Development Task & Finish Group** will cover matters affecting the Council which can include:

- Approving the annual Members' Development Programme and ad hoc events planned in response to key business priorities and supporting the transformation agenda.
- Set out clear responsibilities for members and officer/s to coordinate councillor development.
- Be advised by the OD Officer (Members' Development Lead) on any development opportunities for members and updates on members' development budget to ensure that spending is monitored and applied fairly and equitably to maximise benefits to the widest number of members as possible.
- Share learning and good practice experiences of other councils to encourage capacity building in the council to create a learning organisation

3.2.3 **Reporting arrangements** - the T&F Group will report to the Cabinet and CMT through updates from the Deputy Council Leader (Portfolio Holder) and Director of Finance & Resources. The standing items on each agenda would cover:

- Progress update on Member Development events / activities from the previous quarter and details of upcoming events / activities

- Monitoring of expenditure against the Members' development budget

3.2.4 **Membership** – the T&F group were proposed to have three members and three officers as indicated:

3 Members

- Chair of Employment & Appeals Committee – Cllr Safdar Ali
- Member from the opposition group – Cllr Kelly
- Cabinet Member for Governance and Customer Services and Deputy Leader of the Council – Cllr Akram

3 Officers

- Director nominated by the CE – Neil Wilcox
- Service Lead People – Surjit Nagra
- OD Officer (Members Development) to support the group – Taran Panesar

However, the group has been expanded to include further Councillors (Bains, Dar, Hulme and Sabah), so that we can capture learning from their experiences to date about the development offer. The group would need at least two members and two officers in attendance to be quorate.

3.3 Ongoing Members' Development Programme

3.3.1 Members' Development Programme Process

The Members' Development Programme aims to equip councillors with the understanding, knowledge and skills required to effectively carry out their various responsibilities with the principles and practice of achieving good corporate governance. The process in the Council for achieving this has been as follows:

- **Planning** - the Members' Development (MD) Portfolio Holder presents the plan for the annual Members' Development Programme to full Council in January of each year. Representatives of all political parties are invited to comment and sign off the programme before it is published in the Council's calendar.
- **Commissioning and delivery** - the People Service Lead is assigned to commission and deliver the programme from May in the current year to April of the following year within the financial envelope for each year.
- **Scheduling** - Directors and Cabinet Leads are supported by the OD Officer (Members' Development Lead) from People Service to plan, schedule and evaluate a programme of masterclasses each year facilitated by internal officers or external specialists.
- **Evaluation** - the Members' Development Portfolio Holder reviews attendances and the programme evaluation for each year to ensure it has fulfilled members' learning and development needs within the annual budget allocation.
- **Budget** – this is monitored by the Members' Development Portfolio Holder to ensure spending remains within the budget.

By and large this process has supported the purpose of members' development for the times but in the changing landscape of the future the Members' Development Task and Finish Group will need to keep it under review to ensure the strategy and programme remains effective.

3.3.2 Members' Development Programme from May 2019 to date

Since May 2019 to the present the following Members' Development masterclasses have been held:

3.3.2.1 Programme 2019/20

Date	Title
9 May	Welcome reception with the CE for new and re-elected Members
28 May	New councillor induction facilitated by South East Employers
22 May	Planning: the role of Members in development management - annual mandatory session for Planning Committee Members
5 June	Licensing - the Importance of Decision Making - annual mandatory session for Licensing Committee Members
13 June	Scrutiny - training for Members of Overview Scrutiny Committee and Members of the three scrutiny panels
23 Sep	Appeals Sub-Committee – training to update Members on the revised Home to School Transport Policy 2019-20
8 Oct	Transport Vision and Low Emission Strategy –briefing for Planning Committee Members

3.3.2.2 The following sessions had been planned between Oct 2019 and March 2020 but either deferred due to purdah (pre-election period) or cancelled due to Covid-19. These sessions will be reinstated as soon as possible.

Review of Council Tax Support Scheme - briefing for all Members
Prevent - Home Office briefing and Q&A for all Members
Corporate Parenting evening - annual session for all members
Safeguarding Children – understanding the journey of the child.
Safeguarding Adults – annual session for all members
Finance briefings – briefing paper followed by Q&A session

3.3.2.3 Programme 2020/21

Date	Title
26 May	Planning: the role of Members in development management - annual mandatory session for Planning Committee Members
4 June	Licensing - the Importance of Decision Making - annual mandatory session for Licensing Committee Members
1 July	Scrutiny - training for Members of Overview Scrutiny Committee and Members of the three scrutiny panels

3.3.2.4 The following needs have been identified for consideration in future Members' development training sessions:

Induction and refresher training covering the 'brilliant basics' - Council's vision & values, equality & diversity, finance, health & safety and code of conduct
Member-officer relations , including Council's general communication routes with members - in response to LGA Peer review
Customer Experience – follow up from Customer Experience Transformation Member Engagement meeting on 28.03.2019
Community Development Work related to Transformation agenda — Members and officers working together

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Workshops in liaison with Public Health team
Chairing Skills – continuation from workshops in Oct and Dec 2018
Active Movement – in liaison with Public Health team
Member Resilience – in liaison with CE
Working Effectively with Partners in Localities - in liaison with CE
Soft skills – such as media communications, confident public speaking, resilience using mindfulness and report writing.
First Aid – to help in an emergency

3.3.2.5 Members need the flexibility offered by access to online learning resources. In the past this was provided by Learning Pool but this was replaced in October 2019 by Cornerstone, the Council’s new talent management system. E-learning courses specifically for councillors is envisaged to be provided through Cornerstone in the future.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 In 2019/20 the members’ development budget was £20,000 and £6,000 was spent. The underspend was largely due to cancellations following COVID-19. The budget for 2020/21 is £20,000.

5 Next Steps

The Committee is asked to support the valuable work that will be undertaken by the new Members’ Development Task & Finish Group and support its recommendations for a refreshed approach to the commissioning and delivery of a new Members’ Development Programme that will inspire and support councillors of all political parties to ‘live’ our values. The principles will inform the design of a structured plan for members’ development in response to the Council’s corporate priorities to deliver ‘Our Futures’ transformation and to meet councillors’ individual learning needs.