

From: Ben Watts, General Counsel
To: Selection and Member Services Committee, 29 June 2022
Subject: Member Development and Support
Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a) In my updates to this Committee which have looked forward to the medium term, the focus has often been on the actions which have been required as mitigations to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. Members and Officers will not return to working practices identical to those before the first lockdown, and as there begins to be more certainty around these, there is the opportunity now to look forward as to how the Governance, Law and Democracy function can best work with Members in the new context.
- b) Within the constraints of the resources available, this paper considers some of the things being done and some of the plans for improvement being developed regarding Member development and support.

2. Member Support

- a) This Committee has previously received a presentation on the Member KNet pages¹. It is already a good starting point all Members seeking information, support, or another enquiry. The next part of this paper provides a guide to the pages.
- b) Some Member enquiries will be able to be provided automatically or accessed through these KNet pages acting as a portal. This portal will of course be maintained by Officers and/or direct Members to the most appropriate Officer to assist them.
- c) All Members have a core role as local representatives. With the division of responsibilities within KCC, there are different, and distinct, roles that Members undertake. Mirroring these, there are different Officers and methods of support. Each Member works differently and emphasises a different aspect of the wider Member role. For the division to work efficiently and effectively, the optimum balance needs to be found between providing 81 bespoke support services and identifying where there are commonalities where a clearly identified type or level of service is appropriate.
- d) To help us better design the services to which this portal can link to, it would be useful to gather information from Members as to the type and nature of support services which they would most value. It will not be possible to deliver everything, but this would be a starting point. I am proposing therefore to survey Members on this topic and am asking this Committee to provide

¹ 25 November 2021,
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=8778&Ver=4>

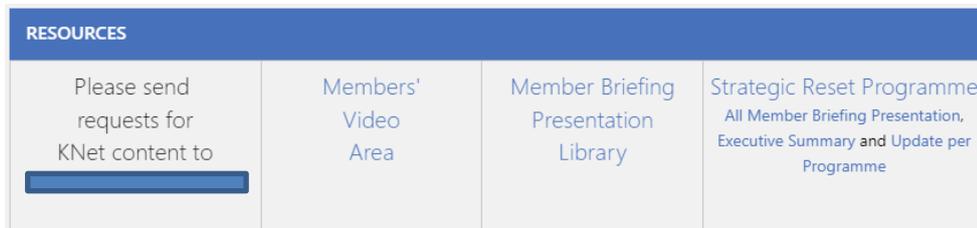
suggestions as to the areas it should cover. In addition, I will arrange workshops over the summer to explore further.

3. Member KNet Overview

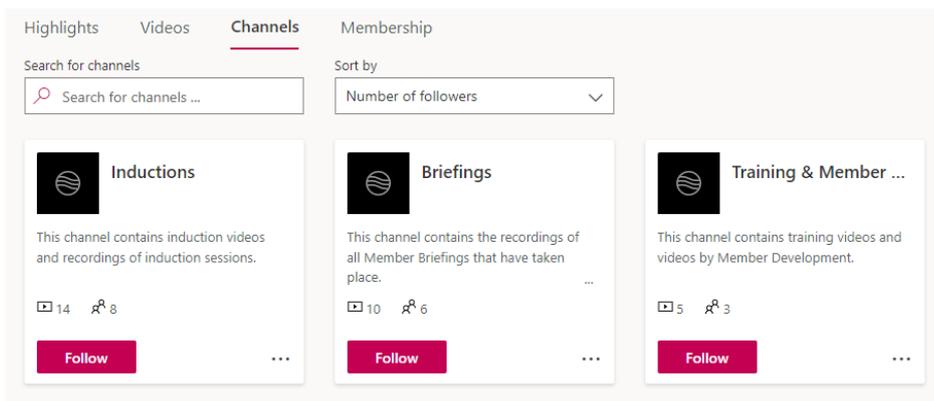
- a) **The Carousel** - The Member KNet pages are reviewed on a weekly basis, and new stories are added to the carousel most weeks. When stories are taken off of the carousel, if the information is still relevant, it is moved to the Advice and Guidance column, beneath the resources bar.



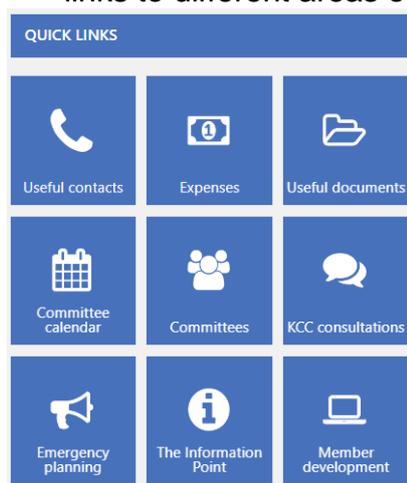
- b) **Resources** - The resources bar beneath the carousel contains quick links to useful resources. During 2020 and 2021 there was a link to a regularly updated summary of Covid-19 related news and policies. This has recently been updated, and the Covid-19 updates have been replaced with links to the most recent briefing presentations and papers for the Strategic Reset Programme.



- c) The resources bar also contains a link to the Members' video area which contains recordings of briefings, inductions, and training sessions which can be watched back at any time. There is also a link to the presentation library, which contains the presentations from Member briefings for reference purposes.



d) **Quick Links** - The quick links section on the main Member KNet page contains links to different areas of KNet and to external pages.



e) The internal pages are:

- Useful contacts: Contact information is provided by each directorate and is refreshed periodically. A refresh of this information is currently underway at the time of writing.
- Expenses: Contains the information needed to submit an expenses claim.
- Useful documents: Contains documents relating to IT support, Member grants, KCC policies and general documents such as the KCC Constitution, and the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form.
- Committees: Contains links to each Committee's Kent.gov page.
- The Information Point: Contains further information on the service the Information Point can provide.
- Emergency Planning: Gives an overview of KCC's role in emergency planning and contains KCC's emergency plans.

f) The following links redirect to external pages:

- Committee calendar: This link redirects to the modern.gov calendar which holds all the formal and informal meetings, training sessions and events.
- KCC consultations: This link redirects to the Let's Talk Kent page, where all open consultations and consultation reports can be found.
- Member development: Currently redirects to Delta, KCC's e-learning platform.

g) **Further Information** - The Member KNet pages also have the KCC News and Media Hub sections which are also on the main KNet homepage.

h) **Future Development** - As the next step in the development of the Member KNet pages, we are keen to continue developing them to ensure they meet the requirements of Members and would welcome further feedback on how to do this. One priority area that has been identified is around Member development, as set out in the next section.

4. Member Development

- a) As set out in the KNet pages overview, there are links to the Members' video area which has material on past briefings as well as on training and development topic. Currently, the "Member Development" tab on the "Quick Links" section of the page leads directly to the Member specific section of the Delta website. As discussed at previous meetings, Member development and training are being actively looked out – this Committee's Member Development Sub-Committee now has the formal membership agreed and this will allow it to develop the framework around Member development. This Sub-Committee will be asked to consider the Member development aspects of the KNet Member pages.

5. Civic Functions

- a) One of the themes that came out of the Member induction survey carried out last year was the lack of opportunity for Members to get to know each other (and Officers) in the less formal ways that virtual meetings do not really allow. As discussed by this Committee, virtual meetings have an important part to play and will continue to do so. The scheduled programme of formal (and physical) meetings has enabled some Members to get to know each other, though this has been necessarily focused on the business being considered at Committee. Apart from full Council meetings, where again the formal business of the Council is the focus, there are few opportunities for Members to come together in larger numbers to be able to build the relationships which strengthen the sense of being one Council.
- b) I would therefore like to invite comments on the idea of arranging more civic events throughout the year which all Members would have the opportunity to attend. These would need to have a clear purpose to ensure the time of Members was being spent effectively.

6. Recommendation

The Selection and Member Services Committee is asked to:

- a) Comment on the proposal to survey Members on their support needs;
- b) Provide further feedback on the Member KNet pages and ask the Member Development Sub-Committee to consider the Member development content;
and
- c) Comment on the idea of organising civic events.

7. Background Documents

None.

8. Report Author and Relevant Director

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