

From: Dylan Jeffrey, Chairman, Member Development Sub Committee
Ben Watts, General Counsel

To: Member Development Sub Committee – 16th October 2024

Subject: Member Development – Annual Report

Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 19th October 2023 Selection and Member Services Committee received a report from the Chairman of the Member Development Sub Committee and a list of priority training was identified for delivery over the 2024 period. Additionally, some training has been demand led and reactive to operational need.
- 1.2 This annual report provides an overview of the 2024 events to date, member development activity and future plans.

2 2024 Training Programme

- 2.1 The following training has been organised to date in the 2024 period:

Delivered Training	Date(s)
Cabinet Decision Making Training	8 January
Mod.Gov Training (Committee System)	11, 16, 17,23, 24, 30, 31 Jan (2) 8 Feb (2)
South East Employers Chiring Skills	6 Feb
Pension Fund Training Day (Pensions Team Managed)	22 Feb
Armed Forces Covenant in Kent	16 April (postponed)
Cabinet Fraud Awareness Training	3 June
South East Employers - Scrutiny Committee Training	9 Sept
Cyber Security Training	16 (canc), 18, 30 September (Cabinet), 1, 10, 14 and 17 October

- 2.2 With the following future events planned for the remainder of the electoral term:

Training	Date(s)
PREVENT Training	22 October
Fraud Awareness – Governance & Audit, Scrutiny, General Member	TBC
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	TBC
Personal Safety	TBC

- 2.3 The Member Development programme has further been enhanced by Member Briefings delivered by Directorates during 2024:

Member Briefing	Date(s)
KCC's Commercial and Procurement Division	12 January
Highways Role in the Development Planning Process	30 January
Budget Briefing	13 February
The Revised Financial Regulations	8 March
Delayed Discharge from Acute Settings	22 March
The Planning Process	6 June
Specialist Teaching and Learning Service	27 June
Ukraine Co-Operation	8 July
Local Transport Plan	12 July
Sea Link Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project – Statutory Consultation	24 July
National Planning Policy Framework	11 September
EU Entry / Exit System (EES) Member Briefing	13 September

- 2.3 Members have been engaged with the programme and along with course feedback on some key events, that were not directorate led, have enabled valuable testing prior to the new term. Feedback on courses is available in Appendix A.
- 2.4 Committee Members may wish to consider reviewing the feedback form and questions to ensure that the Committee capture Member views on course quality and future needs, this will be particularly useful for our 2025 induction programme.
- 2.5 The awaited findings of the Governance Working Group are expected and may further enhance the member development package but have led to delays in actioning some Member Development activity. Additionally, the General Election led to further delays due to members being engaged elsewhere. This has therefore led to a busy schedule for the remainder of the year.

3. Member Training Records

- 3.1 Committee Members previously identified a need for formal recording of learning and development. From fact finding with other authorities there is never a consistent approach to such record transparency, however we do at times receive Freedom of Information requests and we therefore seek a view from the Committee about using the built in records management tool on Mod.gov, our Committee system, to publish such records online from May 2025.

4. Member Development Future Plans

Member Communications and Directorate Engagement

- 4.1 As part of planning for 2025 an officer working group has been established and the team are leading on a number of activities which will be covered in the 2025 Member Induction Planning report.
- 4.2 The aim of the officer working group is to not only establish a programme of events for 2025 but look beyond the first six months and aid member communications and directorate interactions. Changes will be implemented prior to the election and Member feedback sought, with Committee Members playing a key part in this feedback.
- 4.3 Member communication and council wide interactions was a key finding from the 2023 survey and along with a 2024 survey currently being conducted by the Monitoring Officer, will provide areas for enhancement. Previous informal discussions of the Member Development Sub Committee have created a range of activities that the team are working on and again will be covered in future Committee reports and the 2025 Member Induction Planning report.
- 4.4 The new Member Communications Team Channel has just been launched and plans are in place to develop dedicated resources for Members to access. This central location for key documentation and handbooks for Members will ensure an all-in-one location resource assist Members to navigate the council and access resources. The working group would welcome the Sub Committee's input on what they would like to see on this resource and what it could be used for.
- 4.5 Helpful resources from external organisations such as the Local Government Association (LGA) will also be available on this site and enhance the Member Development package.
- 4.6 Following a request for a review of how other authorities, as well as our District and Borough colleagues manage Member communications, it was noted a number of them were moving to SharePoint and/or Teams to aid consistent and up-to-date messaging.
- 4.7 This is also beginning to be rolled out across other Member networks such as within some Committees and is standard practice within operational teams for communications.
- 4.8 Member Hub will be available to show Members how to navigate such systems and Members are reminded that they can visit the Member Desk where the team can assist.

Casework Management

- 4.9 Conversations are currently taking place with our Engagement and Consultation team about how we can manage Member's constituent enquiries and ensure consistent enquiry handling. As part of that process we are meeting with other local authorities to explore what systems they have in place. Following such

investigations and, as part of a future paper on council communication and navigation, an item will be presented at a future committee meeting.

Recommendation(s):

The Member Development Sub Committee is asked to:

- a) Discuss and comment on the Member Development Annual Report
 - b) Contribute to the development of feedback mechanisms for course improvement, identifying areas for improvement
 - c) Consider the use of Mod.gov to provide a published record of Member training attendance to be implemented from May 2025
 - d) Provide feedback on Appendix A, including the current course feedback form
 - e) Endorse the report and request that it be presented to the Selection and Member Service Committee.
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Appendices:

Appendix A – Current Feedback Form, 2024 Course Overview and Feedback Report

Report Author and Relevant Director

Benjamin Watts, General Counsel
03000 416814
benjamin.watts@kent.gov.uk

Jill Kennedy-Smith, Operational Delivery Team Manager
03000 416343
jill.kennedy-smith@kent.gov.uk