

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Member Development Sub-Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 16 October 2024.

PRESENT: Mr D Jeffrey (Chair), Mr N Baker, Ms M Dawkins, Rich Lehmann, Mr M J Sole and Mr A Kennedy (Substitute)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies
(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mr Ross for whom Mr Kennedy was present.

2. Declarations of Interest
(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Member Development - Annual Report
(Item 3)

1) Ben Watts, General Counsel, outlined the report.

2) Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- Members' training attendance could be published on their profiles on the public website. Members can expect that their training record be shared with their group leader.
- It was noted that Members' meeting attendance was not currently being published but this was done at many other local authorities. Concerns were raised about individuals' reasons for absence and equalities considerations.
- Annual programming would help Members to better plan their diaries.
- Group leaders should be taking responsibility for poor training records for Members in their group.
- There were a variety of approaches that could be taken for obtaining Member feedback on training, including polls within the meeting. Members would like a 'you said, we did...' report to show that feedback was making a difference to the Member development offer.
- The induction pack for 2025 will include details of who Members can approach for advice and support.

- It was requested that consideration be given to the accommodation of Members in County Hall as it was considered that the current space was not suitable or meeting the needs of Members.

3) RESOLVED to agree the recommendation as follows:

To endorse the Member Development Annual Report and request that it be presented to the Selection and Member Service Committee.

4. Member Development - 2025 Member Induction Planning (Item 4)

1) Jill Kennedy-Smith, Operational Delivery Team Manager, introduced the report.

2) Further to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- A timetable would be produced so that expectations for the induction would be set, and Members could diarise the sessions.
- Suggestions were made for sessions such as an opportunity to meet different service areas, casework and community engagement and conflict resolution. Members also said that training on soft skills and communication would be beneficial.
- Information was to be shared with Members using a Teams channel or Sharepoint site.
- It was felt that Members could benefit from similar awareness sessions on different topics around equality and diversity as staff in Governance, Law and Democracy receive.
- Mentoring was to be set up within political groups but it was recognised that this was more challenging in small or new groups.
- Members who had participated in LGA courses felt these should be promoted.
- While it was felt personal development plans might feel too prescriptive, some Members felt one-to-one sessions with officers in the first months of office would be helpful.
- Members agreed that the Political Skills Framework and Toolkit should be adopted.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.