

Governance Committee
9 September 2019
Part I
Report of the Member Development Group
Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing the member development process. It is a sub-group of the Governance Committee.

This report provides information on the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development; what it is and what the benefits will be to the Council and to members.

The last report to Governance Committee on 13 May 2019 provided an overview of member development activity during the whole of 2018-19. An update on safeguarding training for members during the same period is provided. This report also provides a summary of spend on member training during 2018-19. An overview of member development activities and attendance during 2019-20 is given, which include details of upcoming member development sessions.

Recommendation

- (1) The Governance Committee supports the intention to undertake the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development.
- (2) That all other matters in the report be noted.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing the member development process. This includes the programme of all-member sessions that run over the municipal year and an induction programme following elections every four years. MDG is also responsible for wider development activity including member training, skills development and obtaining feedback on the member role.
- 1.2 This report provides information on the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development; what it is and what the benefits will be to the Council and to members.
- 1.3 The last report to Governance Committee on 13 May 2019 provided an

overview of member development activity during the whole of 2018-19. An update on safeguarding training for members during the same period is provided. This report also provides a summary of spend on member training during 2018-19. An overview of member development activities and attendance during 2019-20 is given, which include details of upcoming member development sessions.

2. Charter for Elected Member Development

2.1 At its meeting on 10 June 2019, MDG welcomed Mark Palmer, Development Director for South East Employers (SEE), who gave a presentation on the Charter for Elected Member Development. The aims of the Charter are to provide the Council with a robust framework for continued professional member development, with the emphasis on ensuring that all members are appropriately developed and supported, so that they can be effective in their roles.

2.2 Key indicators for the County Council would be:

- That there is a clear commitment to councillor development and support – MDG has given commitment to undertaking the Charter and Governance Committee is asked to support this.
- The council has a strategic approach to councillor development .
- Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.

2.3 The benefits of the Charter to members would be:

- Development has a clear, strong relevance to current challenges and opportunities and the achievement of strategic objectives.
- A robust analytical, evidence-based approach to members' needs means they are better identified, understood and addressed.
- Members are given the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead, serve and contribute more effectively.
- The integration of new members into the Council is accelerated.
- Succession planning, diversity and cultural behaviours are embedded in the strategic process.

2.4 The LGA is supportive of the Charter. In the south-east 18 Councils have achieved Charter status to date.

2.5 There is a five stage approach to the Charter:

- Stage 1 – Commitment from the Council; self -assessment - identifying gaps and evidence, and setting target dates.
- Stage 2 – Preparing the application; implementing an action plan.
- Stage 3 – Assessment by external peers (members and officers), including the portfolio of evidence.
- Stage 4 – Award of the certificate; report, including a 3-year plan.
- Stage 5 – Three-year Charter recognition, including an 18-month interim review and implementing recommendations.

2.6 MDG agreed that the Council should undertake the Charter for Elected

Member Development because it will be beneficial in placing a stronger focus on member learning and development and the member role, and will provide a strategic and structured approach, providing clear benefits to members and the Council. It is anticipated that the process of achieving Charter status will take approximately 18 months.

- 2.7 The MDG Working Group will take forward the initial stages of assessment during its work on Phase 2 of the Journey to the 2021 Elections, which is focusing on the member role.

3. Members' Health and Wellbeing

- 3.1 At its meeting on 10 June 2019, MDG received a presentation from Anna Raleigh, Director of Public Health, focusing on healthy meetings, what they are and how they matter. MDG noted and discussed the following:

- Water and de-caff alternatives for hot drinks should be made available. Consideration should be given to stopping the provision of fruit juices due to the high sugar content.
- Fruit and veg should be the default snacks, rather than biscuits, pastries and cakes.
- For all day meetings, consideration should be given to healthy lunches (e.g. jacket potatoes).
- Prioritising regular comfort breaks, breaks and lunch are important.
- Moving and stretching in meetings is important.
- Walk and talk meetings can be a positive alternative for meetings of up to three people.
- Good room temperature and light are needed.
- Call conferencing can be a useful alternative to travelling to a meeting, particular for those needing to travel long distances.
- Promoting the use of car-pooling is environmentally friendly.
- Sending out papers in advance should help reduce meeting times.
- Starting and finishing on time is very important.
- Being clear on what is required from agenda items can keep the meeting moving.

- 3.2 MDG agreed that healthy meetings information should to be shared with all members, which will be disseminated via the Members Information Service newsletter.

4. Safeguarding Training During 2018/19

- 4.1 As agreed by Governance Committee in May 2018, all members are required to complete safeguarding training (on both adults' safeguarding and children's). Four safeguarding sessions were offered to members during 2018-19 and overall 43 members have completed safeguarding training since May 2017. Group Leaders are informed of attendance figures for monitoring purposes.

- 4.2 Safeguarding training is complemented by the availability of on-line courses. Members have been reminded by the Chairman of MDG of their

obligations regarding safeguarding, and encouraged to take up online learning. MDG considered that a rolling programme of safeguarding training should be offered, alongside the on-line training, so further sessions will be planned for the year ahead.

5. Member Training Budget 2018/19

- 5.1 MDG reviewed the member training budget at its last meeting. The total budget for member training is £15,700. In 2018/19, £12,328 of this was spent, compared with £16,436.72 in 2017/18, which as an election year included extensive induction activities. Individual member attendance at external training events and seminars is agreed in consultation with the relevant Group Leader. A summary of the £12,328 spent in 2018/19 is shown in the table below.

Area of spend	Spend
Member Development Days (including catering and venue hire)	£3,940.85
Member training (including training provided by external trainers, such as on chairmanship skills)	£2,404.85
Individual member attendance at conferences (including Local Government Association, Public Sector Finance, County Councils' Network and CIPFA conferences)	£5,982.34
Total	£12,328.04

6. Member Development Activity, May 2019 to date

- 6.1 The table below sets out Member Day sessions since the last report to the Governance Committee in May 2019.

Date	Topic	Attendance
17 May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questioning Skills (half day) Refresher on Council Procedures and (half day) 	17 18
24 May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escorted Visit to the Viridor Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), Ford 	6 (of max. 13)
26 June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Workshop 	35
10 July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway Maintenance Contracts and Highway Maintenance Service Levels (half day) 	23
17 July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Briefing: Children's Services – Meet the Commissioner 	27

- 6.2 Feedback from members regarding the Questioning Skills and the Refresher on Council Procedures was very positive. Some members commented that these workshops should have been earlier (although both these were covered as part of the Member Induction Programme 2017).
- 6.3 Feedback from the visit to the MRF showed that members found it informative, although it was disappointing that there was a low turnout on the day. Initially, the visit had been fully booked with the maximum of

13 members (plus one officer) but, at short notice, a number of members were unable to attend for various reasons. It was not possible to offer the places at the last minute due to the requirements set by Viridor requiring personal details to be submitted three weeks in advance in order to gain entry to the MRF. Should a further visit be arranged in future then a reserve list will be held.

- 6.4 Members saw the value in the early opportunity to engage in the budget process during June's Budget Workshop. They were particularly impressed with the budget simulation exercise and the opportunity to meet with Services in a market place format was welcomed. The start of the Highways session on 10 July was delayed due to the overrunning of a meeting of Environment, Fire and Community Services Select Committee at which the HMIC Fire Service Inspection was considered and all members were invited to observe. This may have affected the attendance, which was lower than usual for Highways matters. However, members who did attend noted that the updates were very helpful.
- 6.5 Member engagement in the Children's Improvement Programme, a priority area, began with a session on 17 May for members to meet the Commissioner. Further engagement is planned with the next session to take place on 9 October 2019.

7. Member Development Activity, June 2019 to March 2020

- 7.1 Current plans for upcoming Member Days are set out in the table below, although these may be subject to change. MDG considers all proposals for Member Day topics, taking into account member needs, priorities and service requirements.

Date	Topic
4 September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny at West Sussex County Council
9 October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children First (morning session) • Afternoon session (to be confirmed)
21 October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme (to include school place-planning)
6 November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue Service
4 December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The morning has been allocated to an additional meeting of Children and Young People's Services Select Committee • Afternoon session (to be confirmed)
16 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget 2020/21
29 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health (to be confirmed)
26 February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change and Waste (to be confirmed)
25 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Council Design (to be confirmed)

Factors taken into account

8. Consultation

8.1 No consultation has taken place because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

9. Risk Management Implications

9.1 MDG reviews member development regularly. It also undertakes an annual review of all member activity and of the member training budget. To not do so could jeopardise the member development, training and engagement activity and the fulfilment of member needs.

10. Other Options Considered

10.1 There are no other options to consider because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

11. Equality Duty

11.1 An Equality Impact Report is not required for this decision because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

12. Social Value

12.1 There are no social value implications because it is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

13. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

13.1 There are no crime and disorder implications decision because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

14. Human Rights Implications

14.1 There are no Human Rights implications because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

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Background Papers

None