
Report to Governance Committee

9 May 2022

Report of the Member Development Group

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Electoral division(s): Not applicable

Summary

The Member Development Group (MDG) is an advisory body to the Governance Committee on all aspects of member roles and the training and development needed by members to undertake their work on the County Council. It provides regular reports to the Committee on its work and on member development activities. This report provides an update on activities and future plans put in place since its last report in November 2021.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Proposal

1 Background and context

1.1 This report provides an update from the MDG meetings held in December 2021 and February 2022 and on recent member development activities. It also sets out the schedule of future member development sessions. A key performance indicator in Our Council Plan is for all member training and development needs to be identified within 12 months of the 2021 election (through completion of a Training Needs Analysis) and for all mandatory training to be completed within the same timescale. MDG is responsible for monitoring this indicator and will set targets and measures for future years). MDG is also responsible for the monitoring and implementation of activities identified as part of the Councillors' Development Charter awarded to the Council in November 2020.

2 Member Development Activity, November 2021 to April 2022

2.1 The table below sets out member training and development activities provided up to the end of April 2022.

Date	Event	Topic	Attendance
12/11/21	Briefing	NHS	37

Date	Event	Topic	Attendance
17/11/21	Briefing	Fixing Things on the Roads – Highway Maintenance	43
02/12/21	Briefing	How the Capital Programme Works (for Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee but open to all members)	25
08/12/21 (AM)	Briefing	Public Health	27
08/12/21 (PM)	Briefing	West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service: Community Risk Management Plan	25
20/12/21	Briefing	Adults' Care in West Sussex Strategy	28
26/01/22	Budget/ performance	Budget Members' Day	51
26/01/22	External briefing and consultation	National Highways - A27 Arundel Bypass	Not recorded
16/03/22	Scrutiny planning	Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Session	38
22/03/22	Member Development	Scrutiny Chairmanship Skills Training for Scrutiny Committee Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen (provided by South East Employers)	8 (of 10)
13/04/22	Mandatory training	Corporate Parenting including Advocating for Young People	35
13/04/22 and 19/04/22	Mandatory training	IT Security and Data Protection- (aimed at members yet to complete this training)	9

- 2.2 Members attending training/development sessions are asked to provide evaluation feedback via email immediately after the event. MDG regularly considers members' comments and how improve future sessions as well as how to encourage more members to provide valuable feedback. Average feedback levels have been 25% with respondents generally positive about the sessions and members particularly welcoming information briefings such as those provided by the NHS in November and Public Health in December. The all-member Budget engagement session held in January was seen as valuable and informative. Feedback received frequently requests supporting information for member development sessions (e.g. presentation slides) to be made available earlier, so deadlines for sessions have been reinforced and communicated with presenters. MDG will consider how to increase response rates to the evaluation of training and development sessions.
- 2.3 Other member training and development activities have included the offer of tours of the West Sussex Record Office during January and February 2022, which nine members undertook; further dates are being considered. Ahead of

the spring 2022 meetings of Community Local Forums, tours of some libraries were arranged, and 14 members participated; further tours will be offered ahead of the summer meetings. A virtual session providing an overview of the Member Information Network (the Mine) was provided to members who had requested this (four attended) and two RNIB training sessions on Visual Awareness were held to improve awareness of this issue and understanding of the needs of councillors with a visual impairment. The Personal Safety training for members due to be delivered by South East Employers in April had to be postponed and a new date will be scheduled.

- 2.4 Written briefings/information on a variety of topics have also been made available to all members, including on Adult Social Care funding, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, school place planning and school effectiveness and Freedom of Information. NHS briefings on Covid-19 and the Flu vaccination programme were also provided.

3 Mandatory Training and Training Needs Analysis

- 3.1 A key performance indicator in Our Council Plan relates to member development and is reviewed by the MDG (along with political Group Leaders). The target is for all members to have completed a training needs analysis and all mandatory training within one year of the May 2021 Council elections. All members have actively participated in a discussion about their personal training and development needs. The completion rates for mandatory training as at early April 2022 are set out in the table below:

Mandatory training completion rates	Number of members	% of members
Code of Conduct	70	100%
Safeguarding Adults	64	91%
Safeguarding Children	63	90%
Corporate Parenting	67	97%
IT Security and Data Protection	60	86%
Equalities	65	93%

- 3.2 Emphasis has been placed on completion of the IT Security/Data Protection training, with reminders sent to members who have not yet completed this and two trainer-led sessions held during April focused at these members. An equalities and diversity event for members has been arranged for early September 2022 to supplement the information and sessions provided as part of the 2021 induction programme. A refresher on safeguarding is also being considered.
- 3.3 For 2022/23, the key performance indicator for member development will focus on member attendance at, and levels of satisfaction with, training/development sessions.

4 Future Member Training and Development Activities

- 4.1 Future training and development plans are set out in the table below. These may be subject to change and will be regularly reviewed by the MDG to ensure they reflect key corporate priorities and member training needs. Several other training/development proposals are being considered by the MDG for inclusion in the programme and will be reviewed at its next meeting on 16 May 2022.

Date	Event	Topic
11/05/22	Visit and briefing	Introduction to Waste - Visit to the Mechanical Biological Treatment Facility, Warnham including updates on Waste/Environment
22/06/22 (am)	Briefing	Climate Change
22/06/22 (pm)	Briefing	The Military Covenant
27/06/22	Member Development	Carbon Literacy (session 1 of a 2-part event, max. 16 places, to be offered to Member Development Group in the first instance)
04/07/22	Member Development	Carbon Literacy (session 2 of a 2-part event, max. 16 places, to be offered to Member Development Group in the first instance)
July, date TBC	Budget / performance engagement	All-member Council Plan and Budget session
07/09/22	Mandatory Training	Equalities and Diversity, led by South East Employers
14/09/22	Market-place type event	Details to be confirmed – providing an overview of Council services and opportunity for members to meet with/ask questions of senior officers
19/11/22	Budget / performance engagement	All-member Council Plan and Budget session
07/12/22	TBC	TBC
20/01/23	Budget / performance engagement	All-member Council Plan and Budget session
22/02/23	TBC	TBC
22/03/22	TBC	TBC

5 Councillors' Development Charter

- 5.1 MDG continues to oversee the Councillor Development Charter, granted in November 2020 for a period of three years. An interim review of this is due to be carried out by South East Employers on 27 April 2022 and a verbal update on this will be provided to the Committee at its meeting on 9 May 2022, with a fuller update (as appropriate) provided as part of the next MDG report to the Committee. Progress against key areas for action identified through the initial Charter assessment and being monitored by MDG is set out in the table below.

Areas for action identified November 2020	Progress update April 2022
Members taking responsibility for their own development through introduction of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and MDG monitoring/encouraging engagement in	TNA in place since the May 2021 elections and all members have actively participated in this (to be reviewed at least annually). MDG regularly reviews TNA process and of member participation in training/development, including ways to encourage

Areas for action identified November 2020	Progress update April 2022
member development	higher levels of engagement.
MDG taking a more strategic focus	Terms of reference reviewed; MDG work programme and reports strengthened, focusing on strategic aims and linking to corporate priorities
Impact of Covid-19 on future of member development reviewed by MDG as well as consideration of how to extend digital outreach	Reviewed in October 2020 and again in October 2021; use of technology expanded (virtual sessions, training films/animations, recordings of sessions, e-learning modules), but MDG will continue to assess, recognising the benefits of some face-to-face interaction
'Be a Councillor' programme evaluated in preparation for 2025 Council elections	The LGA are reviewing the national 'Be a Councillor' programme and will be providing local authorities with a toolkit for their own local campaigns MDG to review later in 2022
To develop a forward-looking and innovative induction programme led by MDG	Comprehensive induction programme delivered after the 2021 Council elections, although significantly impacted by Covid-19. Reviewed by MDG in October 2021 and reported to Governance Committee November 2021.
To develop social media training/support and best practice guidance to councillors	Provided as part of the induction programme and guidance available via the members' intranet (the Mine)
To develop a leadership development strategy for members in senior positions	In place and includes identification of appropriate external training and mentoring (e.g. through the Local Government Association).
Scrutiny development to prioritise responsibilities within the national guidance and provide support relating to questioning skills	A specific scrutiny induction programme developed and delivered during 2021/22, including training sessions on decision-making and scrutiny essentials, questioning skills and a tailored session delivered by the national Centre for Governance
To provide regular support to Chairs and Vice Chairs with chairing skills, including relating to hybrid meetings	Chairmanship skills training sessions provided by South East Employers; role profiles for chairmanship roles provided; guidance on chairing virtual meetings provided

6 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

6.1 Alternatives to the proposed member training and development activities may be considered within the Committee's debate.

7 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 7.1 All members attending member development sessions are invited to complete an evaluation survey, the analysis of which is reported to MDG to inform future plans and it evaluates the Member Induction Programme every four years. MDG carries out survey of all members from time to time to ascertain members opinions and requirements in relation to training and development, e.g. and linked support, such as the members' IT offer. The Executive Leadership Team is regularly invited to comment on plans for member training and development.

8 Finance

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the content of this report. Plans for member development and induction can be met from within existing resources. The member training and development budget is £12,700 per year; it will be reviewed at the end of the municipal year by MDG.

9 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
County councillors are unable to fulfil their roles	The member development and induction programmes provide training and information tailored to their needs and overseen by the Member Development Group

10 Policy alignment and compliance

- 10.1 There are no legal, Crime and Disorder Act, human rights, climate change or public health implications directly arising from this report. The member development programme aims to meet the Equality Duty through providing fair opportunities for learning and development to all members. Social value is provided by ensuring members receive support and training to be able to fulfil their roles effectively and therefore help the council to achieve its aims and objectives.

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Background papers

None