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| To: | Standards Committee |
| Date: | 1 November 2017 |
| Report of: | Acting Head of Law and Governance |
| Title of Report: | Member Training |

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| Summary and recommendations | | |
| Purpose of report: | | To update the Committee on training on the code of conduct and standards delivered to members in 2017 and outline proposals for 2018 |
| Recommendations: That the Committee: | | |
| 1. | Notes the content and feedback of the member training on the code of conduct and standards delivered in 2017 | |
| 2. | Notes and comments on the outline of the training on the code of conduct and standards proposed for 2018 | |

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| Appendices | |
| Appendix 1 | Feedback analysis |

# Introduction and background

1. Annual training in Planning, Licensing and Code of Conduct has been required for all Councillors for a number of years.
2. Compulsory training in code of conduct, standards, and related topics such as data protection and Freedom of Information is provided for councillors each year. Training in Licensing is compulsory for all members of the relevant committees each year. Changes to the Councils Constitution agreed in 2016 changed the requirements for compulsory training in the basics of planning to be attended in an election year only. Non-compulsory modules covering specific planning topics are offered throughout the year.
3. . Most councillors have undertaken basic safeguarding training and will be offered this again in 2018.
4. The agreed training programme for elected councillors is currently :

* A framework of compulsory training covering a 4 year term of office aimed at developing skills and knowledge useful and relevant to councillors.
* Basic training to be delivered in election years (every other year)
* Non-election years would be used to cover topics aimed at improving skills and knowledge.
* The course modules and outline content are subject to consultation with senior officers as appropriate, and with Group Leaders.
* The broad content of the compulsory (basic) and non-compulsory modules would be agreed between Committee and Members Services and the trainer, with the trainer responsible for preparation and delivery.

**Outcomes for 2017 for code of conduct training**

1. Training dates were arranged in April and May, with mop-up sessions in June. 2017 is a non-election year and so training delivered was aimed at improving skills and knowledge. Councillors had a choice of a 6 dates offering a training session lasting about 90 minutes.
2. The Monitoring Officer delivered all the training sessions which covered reminders of the basics of the code, registering and declaring interests, bias and predetermination, code of conduct complaints, and handling Freedom of Information requests. Scenarios were presented which gave councillors an opportunity to discuss the code of conduct, interests, and potential pitfalls. All 48 members attended code of conduct training.
3. Four non-compulsory planning sessions are planned running through to Spring 2018
4. Councillors can now access both public and restricted circulation papers through the Modgov app and an extranet site, although not all councillors find accessing this easy. Presentations and handouts are published there for their reference.
5. Standard feedback forms were used to gather councillors’ views on the training. Feedback forms were handed in by 27 councillors.
6. Summarised feedback is shown below. Overall the response from members is positive: the large majority of responses are “very good” and “good”.



# Proposals for the member training programme for 2018 – 2019

1. Proposals for the member training programme for 2018 – 2019 are in development. Final proposals will be presented to political group leaders and the Chief Executive early in the new year.
2. The member feedback on the 2016 and 2017 training was generally positive about the overall programme and approach; officers are also content with the number and content of the sessions offered.
3. This provides a good basis for the 2018 arrangements The programme does need to develop and of there will of course be some work to review and refresh the content of the sessions to ensure that they are topical and to make minor improvements to the format of the sessions and the administration arrangements. As 2018 is an election year some further consideration is needed to ensure that compulsory sessions address both the needs of new/inexperienced councillors and those who have attended a number of basic courses before.
4. More radical review is not considered to be obviously necessary but should this be the case it is suggested that this should happen to coincide with the “all out elections” in 2020. That will be the opportune time to introduce new training arrangements to meet the needs of a new Council. Planning and preparation for such a thorough review of member training would need to start in late 2018.

**Non Compulsory Training offered**

1. To complement the compulsory training programme in 2016 a programme of non-compulsory training was offered to members. This covered local government finance, media and social media, how the council works and chairing skills. Despite these being cited by members as useful training and a range of dates being offered they were not well attended. Officers will discuss with the organisation and group leaders a non-compulsory programme for 2018 that can produce a better outcome.

**Induction proposed for after 2018 elections**

1. It is important that newly elected councillors are able to be given the immediate information, tools and skills to get started. A programme of induction will be delivered on the Monday after the election which is compulsory for all new councillors (councillor not in a seat prior to the election). This programme will include senior officer introductions and corporate priorities, advice on access into the organisation, how to access member funds, completion of necessary forms and documents and allocation and training on ICT equipment. A “Welcome Pack” will be given to all members on the night of the count.
2. In addition all newly elected members will be linked with a suitable officer to help them through their first few months, and service areas will host any member who wishes to meet their teams and see first-hand what they do and how they do it.

**Briefing sessions**

1. Throughout the 2017/18 and continuing into 2018/19 members are offered a programme of briefing sessions covering topical issues put forward by both members and officers. The dates of these briefings are given to members in the programme of meetings at least a year in advance. These briefings are delivered by senior officers and the City Executive Board Portfolio Holder for the subject matter attends to give support and give a political perspective. This programme has improved during 17/18 but attendance still remains relatively low. A “library” of information is available to members who couldn’t attend.

# Conclusion

1. We continue to improve the training offer to members and encourage members to come forward with their views and suggestions for improvement.

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