

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	21 May 2018
Report of the	-	Member Development Task Group
Subject	-	Annual Report of the Member Training and Development Task Group

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. The MDTG provides a structured and on-going Member-led approach to Member training and development. This report provides full Council with an annual update on Member Training and Development issues.
2. The Membership of the MDTG is usually fixed for the life of the Council; however, in February this year, due to other commitments, Councillor Azad was replaced by Councillor Potts. The current membership is confirmed as: Councillors Lord Ampthill (Member Training and Development Champion and Chairman), Clark (non-Group Member), Dixon (Liberal Democrat Group Leader), Graham (newly elected 2015 Member), Kenward (Conservative Group), Oliver (Independent Group Leader) and Potts (newly elected 2015 Member). All Group Leaders are able to send a substitute if they are unable to attend.
3. The MDTG has met four times since the last annual report and the minutes arising from the meetings are highlighted within the Members' Bulletin eZine and published on the Members' Area of the website.
4. Whilst the initial intensive training period following the 2015 elections has passed, there has remained a steady provision of Member Training and Development opportunities for Members during the past 12 months.

South East Charter for Member Development

5. As Members may recall, in 2017 the Council recommitted to the South East Employers' (SEE) Charter for Elected Member Development that the Council has held since 2007. The Charter provides a robust, structured framework designed to help the Council enhance and hone Member development; it demonstrates this Council's commitment to developing its Councillors in order to assist with the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and meeting the needs of the community.
6. The Council was reassessed in March of this year and was awarded the Charter for the fourth time – this is an excellent result. Thank you to those Members who took part in the Assessment Day. Following the award, the formal report highlighted the following strengths of the Council and these are to be commended:

- A culture of member development is embedded – RDC has been a Charter Council for ten years and continues to have forward momentum.
- Top political and managerial commitment to member development, backed up by continued strong officer support.
- High profile Member Development Task Group that is forward looking and member-led.
- Excellent engagement with Training Needs Analysis – 89% return rate in June 2017.
- New learning days have been implemented and have been well received by Members.
- Commitment to hosting ‘Be a Councillor’ events ahead of the next elections (November 2018).
- Focussed Member Development work programme.
- Sustainable Member Training and Conference Budget - £15,000 in 2018/19.
- Promoting use of social media to enable Councillors to better engage with their communities.

7. A number of areas for development were highlighted in the report, including:

- Member Development Task Group to lead on mapping the skills/knowledge required to meet the Rother 2020 agenda and ensure they are reflected in the Member Development work programme.
- Member development to focus on skills for the future – for example, transformation, change, risk and ensure that overview and scrutiny is used as an engine for ideas.
- Develop a forward looking induction programme for 2019 and explore opportunities for shared induction with neighbouring District Councils.
- Build leadership development into the Terms of Reference for the Member Development Task Group. Prioritise developing a systematic approach to leadership development to support succession planning.
- Take forward the process of introducing mandatory training led by the Member Development Task Group. Explore the possibility of linking training attendance to Members Basic Allowance – Utilise the opportunity to do this with the Independent Remuneration Panel process taking place later this year.
- Reinvigorate the shared/joint approach to supporting member development across East Sussex.
- Explore transferring the political group 1-1 process into corporate Personal Development Plans.
- Introduce an e-learning package to support all councillors to engage with training and development activities. Explore whether there is an opportunity to jointly procure a solution with neighbouring Districts and link to a wider Digital Strategy for the Council.

8. The MDTG will be giving consideration to the above at its next meeting in June 2018.

Training and Development Programme

9. In accordance with the Member Training and Development Strategy a second Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was undertaken in May 2017 to inform the remainder of the Member Training and Development Programme and to help evaluate the success of the programme delivered thus far. The MDTG is

pleased to confirm that there was an 89% return of the TNA forms and the results indicated that Members felt more confident in a number of areas, when compared to the initial 2015 TNA results.

10. The MDTG considered the results and agreed that the Training and Development Programme included the following training during the remainder of the Council Term: Effective Meeting/Presentation/Public Speaking Skills (delivered October 2017), Dealing with the Media (delivered October 2017) and Social Media (delivered March 2018).
11. It was noted that the preferred learning style remains group work and the majority of training events continue to be organised using this method. With regard to timing, Members prefer half-day, mornings or on the day of a Council meeting and events are programmed at these times, whenever possible.
12. A full list of the development activities that have been offered to Members during the last year is available on the Members' Area of the website as well as the feedback received on these sessions, where appropriate.
13. This year also saw the introduction of a new initiative, designated learning days. Following consultation with officers and Members, the MDTG agreed that two annual (excluding election years) half day 'Learning Days' (one morning and one afternoon) be held six months apart one in late May/early June and one in December/January. The sessions are offered to Service Managers to update Members on any emerging service issues/changes in working practices etc.
14. The first learning day took place on Wednesday 23 January and was a great success with Members receiving a presentation from the Food Safety Team from the Environmental Health Service and an update from SMT on the Rother 2020 Programme. The MDTG was particularly pleased with the presentation from SMT and the informal opportunity this gave Members to hear direct from SMT. As a result, the MDTG requested that SMT provide an update / presence to Members at each learning day that takes place and this has been agreed by SMT.

Evaluation

15. In accordance with the Council's Member Training and Development Strategy, the Council is committed to obtaining feedback on the effectiveness of training and development undertaken and Members are required to complete an evaluation form and in addition provide feedback on how the skills/knowledge gained has been of benefit to them and the Council.
16. The MDTG considers feedback on all training and development activities at the next available meeting and it is very pleasing to report that the evaluation return rate is consistently high, running at between 85-100%. This is an excellent result that demonstrates Members' commitment to continuous improvement and enables the MDTG to consider feedback and implement improvements to learning and development activities as they are identified.

Finance

17. As part of the 2018/19 Draft Revenue Budget setting process the Member training budget has been reduced from £12,000 to £9,000. There is, however a separate Members' Conference Expenses Budget of £6,000. This means that in total for 2018/19 there is a Member Training and Conference Budget of £15,000 (£9k for Member Training and £6k for conferences).
18. In light of budget reductions, and in order to ensure value for money (vfm) it is essential that once Members have requested a place on a training session that the date is reserved, particularly where an external consultant or other additional expenditure such as transport is involved.
19. It is disappointing to report that once again there have been occasions during the last year where the overall vfm has been compromised when the number of Members has reduced due to last minute drop outs. With a reduced budget it will be even more essential to ensure vfm and the MDTG will be monitoring Members' requests to attend and drop-out rates and reasons more closely.

Partnership Working with East Sussex District and Borough Councils

20. Member training and development opportunities have continued to be shared with our local authority neighbours as and when appropriate. It is anticipated that there may be generic training and development opportunities arising between the East Sussex district and borough Councils following the elections in May 2019.

Member Attendance Statistics

21. The MDTG continues to receive an update at each meeting of the number of training events each Member has attended since the elections in May 2015; this information is primarily for use by the Group Leaders and the most recent update is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
22. Training and Development is not compulsory, except for those Members serving on the Council's regulatory committees; each Member has very specific training and development requirements, based on their own personal circumstances which will include experience, role (both internal and external to Rother), interests, availability and length of service as a Councillor.

The Next 12 Months

23. In looking ahead, historically, during last 12 months of a Council Term, the training requirements reduce as a result of Members feeling more confident in their role; Members also start to look ahead and contemplate whether they will be standing for re-election in 2019 and this will also have an influence on their training needs. The training and development offer tends to focus on the mandatory training, licensing, planning and other function specific training such as Treasury Management.
24. The MDTG's work programme for 2018/19 is full and will be focusing on preparing for the 2019 elections, including amongst other matters, the pre-election event to be held in November 2018, considering and formulating the Member Induction Programme, reviewing and updating various guides (Becoming a Rother District Councillor, Rural and Bexhill Members),

considering Member Induction Packs, IT Provision for 2019 and Councillor Role Profiles. All Members will be contacted for contributions and comment on these issues as and when appropriate.

Conclusions

25. This last civic year has seen the continued delivery against the Member Training Programme, as informed by the second TNA, with many opportunities for Member development being made available. The Council has been awarded the South East Employer's Member Development Charter for the fourth time – this is an impressive result and all Members should be proud of the contribution they have made to this process and award.
26. It is expected that the Member Training and Development needs will decrease over the remaining year of this Council, whilst ensuring that the annual mandatory training requirements are met.
27. I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank formally my fellow past and present MDTG Members, Councillors Azad, Clark, Dixon, Graham, Kenward, Oliver and Potts for the commitment and contribution they have made over the past year.

Councillor Lord Ampthill
Chairman of the Member Development Task Group

Member Training Statistics

1. Detailed below is a summary of the number of training events that each individual Member has attended since election in 2015 to date.

COUNCILLOR	TRAINING EVENTS		COUNCILLOR	TRAINING EVENTS	
Lord Amphill	33	↑ (1)	Sally-Ann Hart	36	↔
Abul Azad	54	↑ (1)	Ian Hollidge	39	↑ (2)
John Barnes **	7	↔	Bridget Hollingsworth	17	↔
Mary Barnes	19	↔	Joy Hughes	51	↔
Roger Bird	14	↔	Ian Jenkins	20	↔
Graham Browne	27	↑ (1)	Gillian Johnson	17	↑ (1)
James Carroll	26	↔	Jonathan Johnson	13	↔
Richard Carroll	6	↔	Brian Kentfield	16	↔
Charles Clark	10	↔	Martin Kenward	4	↔
Gary Curtis	40	↑ (1)	Eleanor Kirby-Green	6	↔
Kevin Dixon *	11	↑ (1)	Carl Maynard	5	↔
Patrick Douart	13	↔	Martin Mooney	18	↔
Stuart Earl	28	↔	Doug Oliver	24	↑ (2)
Deirdre Earl-Williams **	6	↔	Paul Osborne	6	↔
Simon Elford	8	↔	Jacqueline Potts	21	↑ (1)
Robert Elliston	24	↔	Sue Prochak	21	↑ (1)
Kathryn Field	10	↔	Chris Saint	30	↑ (1)
Tony Ganly	10	↔	Gennette Stevens	36	↑ (1)
Tom Graham	38	↔	Maurice Watson	39	↑ (1)

KEY	
↔	None attended since last MDTG meeting
↑ + (number)	Attended since last MDTG meeting

* Elected 15 July 2015

** Elected 27 October 2016