

## Rother District Council

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	22 May 2019
Report of the	-	Member Development Task Group
Subject	-	Annual Report of the Member Training and Development Task Group

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

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### Introduction

1. The Member Development Task Group (MDTG) provides a structured and on-going Member-led approach to Member training and development. This report provides Members with the last annual update on Member Training and Development issues from the current MDTG.
2. The Membership of the MDTG is usually fixed for the life of the Council and is made up of all Group Leaders, the majority Group Leader's Representative, the Member Training and Development Champion, two newly elected Members from the last elections (2015) and any independent (non-Group Members).
3. The current membership is therefore confirmed as: Councillors Lord Ampthill (Member Training and Development Champion and Chairman), Clark (non-Group Member), Dixon (Liberal Democrat Group Leader), 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. Following the resignation of Councillor Graham, there is technically a vacancy for a newly elected Member, however, this will now be held over until May 2019.
4. The MDTG has met four times since the last annual report with its primary focus during 2018/19 being preparing for the new Council in May 2019. The minutes arising from the meetings are highlighted within the Members' Bulletin eZine and published on the Members' Area of the website. Despite being in the last full year of the life of this Council, there has remained a steady provision of Member Training and Development opportunities for Members, including annual mandatory training during the past 12 months.

### South East Charter for Member Development – Areas for Development

5. As reported last year the Council was reassessed and awarded the South East Employers' (SEE) Charter for Elected Member Development in March 2018 for the fourth time.
6. In June 2018, the MDTG gave consideration to the areas for development that had been highlighted in SEE's final report, as follows:
  - i) MDTG 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.

Training sessions on transformation, change and financial risk management to be incorporated within the Member Training Programme for 2019/20.

- ii) 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.

Emerging topics from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be covered at Member Learning Days.

- iii) Develop a forward looking induction programme for 2019 and explore opportunities for shared induction with neighbouring District Councils.

In light of mixed feedback, only appropriate joint generic training will be pursued in the future.

- iv) 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.

This would not be pursued at present.

- v) 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.

The advantages and disadvantages of introducing a financial linkage between training attendance and Members' Basic Allowance are still being explored.

- vi) Reinvigorate the shared/joint approach to supporting member development across East Sussex.

Shared/joint generic training opportunities will be explored where appropriate.

- vii) Explore transferring the political group 1-1 process into corporate Personal Development Plans.

1-1 evaluations should be progressed by political Group Leaders with the results being fed into MDTG.

- viii) 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.

Further research will be undertaken on e-learning packages and reported back at a later date.

7. The Council's Charter Award is subject to an 18 month review in September/October 2019; this usually involves a conference call with the Chairman of the MDTG and Democratic Services.

## **Member Induction Programme 2019**

8. Since September of last year, in conjunction with the Strategic Management Team, the MDTG has worked on the formulation of the Member Induction Programme 2019, including the Induction Day itself. The Programme has been compiled by drawing on the feedback received from both Members and officers following the 2015 induction programme.
9. The MDTG is confident that the Programme which is currently being put in place will meet the needs of the new Council by providing a comprehensive induction programme, at a reasonable pace.
10. The Programme will be reviewed and monitored by the MDTG and it is hoped that the approach and initiatives will be welcomed by both new and returned Members. It is vital that returned Members are active participants in the induction training for a number of reasons: to reinforce this Council's commitment to Member Training and Development; to encourage and help shared learning with fellow newly elected Members; and to further increase their own knowledge as new legislation and initiatives change the face of local government and service delivery.

## **Pre-Election Event**

11. On 19 November 2018, the Council held its second pre-election event which forms part of the Council's strategy in attracting new Members to stand for election. Following a successful media campaign 64 delegates pre-registered to attend; however, disappointingly, only 31 people out of the 64 actually attended.
12. The programme for the evening included: a welcome and introduction session by the Executive Director; a Panel of current serving Councillors who shared their experiences, including specific formal roles and work in their local areas; a brief overview of member development and training by the Democratic Services Manager; a question and answer session; and an informal session at the end for networking with Councillors, officers and political agents.
13. General feedback received showed that overall the event was well-received, with the majority of attendees indicating that they would be standing for election in May.

## **Training and Development Programme**

14. Historically, during the last year of a four year term leading up to elections, training and development activity is kept to a minimum. This tends to be due to a number of reasons including Members feeling more confident in their role and knowledge due to the earlier intensive training activity, training fatigue and a re-focus towards re-election and whether or not to re-stand.
15. This last year has been no exception with training focusing on on-going (mandatory) regulatory training (planning and licensing), Social Media, Health and Wellbeing, Equality and Diversity (mandatory), Chaining Skills, Managing Your Workload and Treasury Management (mandatory for Audit and Standards Committee Members).

16. The Members' Learning Days have also proven to be popular with content including Licensing, Active Rother Strategy, Rough Sleepers and SMT Updates at each session.
17. Each appropriate training and development event held in 2018-19 has been evaluated on the day by participants and a summary of the results have been monitored and considered by the MDTG and published in the Members' Area on the website.
18. Members can also benefit from attending conferences and other external events where they relate to their areas of interest or responsibility and assist in meeting the Council's corporate objectives, as well as individuals' personal development. Members are requested to contact their Group Leaders in the first instance if they wish to attend an external conference / event.
19. During this past year Members have attended external events on Local Government Income Generation, Playing for the Future and What Tomorrow's Transport Technology could mean for Councils and the LGA's Annual Culture and Tourism Conference 2019.

## **Finance**

20. As part of the 2018/19 Revenue Budget setting process the Member training budget was reduced from £12,000 to £9,000. This, together with the separate Members' Conference Expenses Budget of £6,000 leaves a total budget of £15,000. During this last year, as training and development activity is usually at a minimum, the budget has been adequate with just under £7,000 being spent.
21. 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.
22. The MDTG receive routine budget reports throughout the year and, whilst it is evident that in most years the budget is not spent, the majority of spend will be within the first two years of a Council. The initial Member Induction Programme that is being put in place already includes a number of training sessions that will be provided by external sources and this will involve a much heavier call on the budget than in subsequent years.

## **Member Training and Development Attendance Statistics**

23. The MDTG continues to receive an update at each meeting on 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.
24. 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.

## **Terms of Reference**

25. The MDTG undertook a review of the current Terms of Reference (ToR), including the membership and agreed that the current arrangements worked well. It was decided that the ToR would be reviewed by the new MDTG at its first meeting in June 2019.

## **Conclusions**

26. This last civic year in the four year cycle, has seen the customary reduction in Member Training and Development, with only mandatory and other essential training taking place.
27. The next 12 months will be a busy and challenging time for the new MDTG; the all-out district elections in May will see a number of long-standing Councillors not seeking re-election, and this, together with the unpredictable election results, could result in many new Councillors being elected.
28. The need to ensure that Councillors therefore engage in a high quality, relevant and robust Member Training and Development Programme is therefore even more crucial than ever. The MDTG will be monitoring and evaluating the on-going Member Induction Programme and agreeing the Member Training Programme, based on the results of the Training Needs Analysis for the following 18 months after the initial induction period.
29. It has been a privilege to steer this Group since May 2015 and I am pleased with the continued high quality Member Training and Development offer. I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank formally my current fellow Task Group Members, Councillors Clark, Dixon, Kenward, Oliver and Potts for the contribution they have made over their time on the MDTG and the officer support that is provided both directly by Democratic Services and indirectly through all staff involved in guiding and providing assistance to Members.

Councillor Lord Ampthill  
Chairman of the Member Development Task Group

## MEMBER TRAINING ATTENDANCE STATISTICS 2015-2019

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 Ampthill	40	↑ (1)	Ian Hollidge	46	↑ (2)
Abul Azad	57	↔	Bridget Hollingsworth	19	↔
John Barnes **	9	↔	Joy Hughes	58	↑ (1)
Mary Barnes	25	↑ (1)	Ian Jenkins	24	↑ (1)
Roger Bird	17	↔	Gillian Johnson	20	↔
Graham Browne	30	↔	Jonathan Johnson	17	↔
James Carroll	31	↔	Brian Kentfield	23	↑ (1)
Richard Carroll	8	↔	Martin Kenward	7	↑ (1)
Charles Clark	12	↑ (1)	Eleanor Kirby-Green	8	↑ (1)
Gary Curtis	48	↑ (1)	Carl Maynard	7	↔
Kevin Dixon *	13	↔	Martin Mooney	22	↔
Patrick Douart	15	↔	Doug Oliver	30	↑ (2)
Deirdre Earl-Williams **	9	↔	Paul Osborne	6	↔
Simon Elford	9	↔	Jacqueline Potts	28	↑ (1)
Robert Elliston	29	↑ (1)	Sue Prochak	27	↑ (1)
Kathryn Field	13	↔	Chris Saint	35	↑ (1)
Tony Ganly	18	↑ (1)	Gennette Stevens	38	↑ (1)
Kathy Harmer ***	1	↑ (1)	Maurice Watson	48	↑ (1)
Sally-Ann Hart	43	↔			

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

\* Elected 15 July 2015

\*\* Elected 27 October 2016

\*\*\* Elected 10 January 2019