

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28 JULY 2022

Report Title	Member Development
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Member development session statistics

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report provides an update on member training for the Committee's information and seeks support for the classification and requirements in relation to the member training programme.

2. Executive Summary

- (a) Details of training and briefings that Members have received since May 2021 was reported to the meeting of Democracy and Standards Committee in January 2022 which included:

- Ethics and Standards training for Members
- The offer and take up of generic training
- Mandatory targeted training, e.g., for members of the Planning and Licensing Committees. Councillors must have received this training before they can sit on either of these Committees.
- Further training planned and for the Committee to identify whether there is a need for additional training and what this should cover

(b) Since January 2022, further development sessions for Members have taken place, along with various important Member briefings that include:

Code of Conduct training

Code of Conduct training in relation to Planning

Planning Committees training

Planning Committee training for Councillors newly appointed to a Planning Committee

Overview and Scrutiny training

(c) At its meeting in January 2022, the Committee resolved that any refresher training for Members of Planning Committees and the Licensing Committees would be mandatory and this has been communicated to Councillors.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Democracy and Standards Committee:

- a) Notes the Councillor development programme to date and identifies whether there is a need for additional training that is not currently included within the programme.
- b) That consideration is given to the induction programme and agree which of the sessions should be repeated during 2022/2023.

3.2 *Reasons for Recommendations*

3.2.1 The recommendations are intended also to enable the Committee to receive details regarding the Councillor development programme and provide members with an opportunity to suggest further training requirements that they feel are required.

4. Report Background

Member Development

4.1 *The Standards responsibilities of the Committee include Advising, training, or arranging training for Members and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on matters relating to the member Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Conduct.* Member training is a wider issue and particularly for a new Council it is important that there is Member oversight of the Member training programme to ensure that Members have the skills they need to support effective decision making.

4.6 Member development is training and development opportunities, activities and programmes that offered to elected members by West Northamptonshire Council which support members to carry out their roles effectively.

Induction Programme

- 4.7 As reported to the meeting of the Committee in January 2022, the Councillor Induction Programme was designed for both returning and newly elected councillors.
- 4.8 The Councillor Induction Programme took place over three months – May, June and July 2021 and it is envisaged that some sessions will be repeated later in the year. The Committee is asked to consider which of the sessions detailed in the induction programme should be repeated during 2022/2023.
- 4.9 The member induction programme took place remotely using the online audio and video system – Zoom. The sessions were well attended; details of the main session and attendance statistics are attached at **Appendix A**.
- 4.10 Training, including any refresher training, for members of both the Planning Committees and Licensing Committees is mandatory.
- 4.11 Officers are continuing to work with representatives of the LGA regarding repeat sessions and it is expected that these will include:
- Chairing Skills
 - Chairing Skills for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
 - Equalities

As soon as the above development sessions are finalised, they will be programmed into the Councillor development programme and members will be invited to attend.

- 4.12 Officers worked with external training providers regarding development sessions in respect of:
- Overview and Scrutiny – “Doing good Scrutiny”
 - Planning Matters – training for all Members of all of the Planning Committees

These sessions were held during the spring 2022 and provided by external training providers.

- 4.13 There are a number of resources available for members within the e-learning system “iLearn”:
- Councillor Induction and member development section containing slides and recordings of the sessions from the Councillor Induction events held in May 2021
 - An e-learning section which contains the following:
 - Cyber Security
 - Community Leadership
 - Access to the L&D MS365 e-learning page which contains
 - Hints and tips on using MS365
 - Application-focussed quick-start guides and videos
 - My Development Toolkit

- Search any topic and find videos and articles to enhance your own development journey.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider whether there is a need for additional training that is not currently included within the programme; and
- 5.2 To consider the induction programme 2021/2022 and agree which of the sessions should be repeated during 2022/2023.

5 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals. However, should an external training provider be sourced to deliver any training there would be a cost implication but there is budgetary provision available in the Councillor development budget.
- 6.1.2 There are no direct manpower implications arising from this report however should the training be delivered by internal officers there is a resource implication upon those officers.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 The Democracy and Standards Committee and the wider council have a duty to ensure that Members are supported in carrying out their roles effectively. This includes providing training. One of the key roles undertaken by Members is decision making and particularly quasi-judicial decision making where there is a requirement to adhere to specific rules in the way in which decisions are made. Failure to adhere to these rules can jeopardise the decision making of the Council. In addition, the Council is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct which all councillors must uphold in performing their duties. A structured training and development programme for newly elected Members and continuing training for all Members throughout their term of office will equip them with essential knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are risks if Council members do not have the training, they need to carry out their roles effectively.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 This is an update report that details member development information and is not therefore appropriate for wider consultation.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 This is an update report and is not appropriate to be referred to Overview and Scrutiny. The annual report 2021/2022 of the Committee included details of member development through the Committee. Each annual report of the Democracy and Standards Committee will include such data.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 There are no immediate climate implications arising from this report.

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 There are no immediate community implications arising from this report.

7 Background Papers

Members' induction programme 2021/2022

Democracy and Standards Committee - agenda and minutes - 27 January 2022