

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20 OCTOBER 2022

Report Title	Member Development- Mandatory training and specific Training needs for the Democracy and Standards Committee
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Member development sessions 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, particularly in relation to mandatory training for all Members and whether there are specific training requirements for the Democracy and Standards Committee.

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 (the Committee) in July 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 July 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 and Planning briefings
- Net Zero v Carbon Neutral briefing – a second briefing is scheduled in the autumn 2022

At its meeting in July 2022, the Committee suggested Equality and Diversity training is scheduled for all Councillors and this is currently being explored.

(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. Code of Conduct training has been identified as mandatory for all Councillors to attend. This Committee is therefore asked to consider whether any other Member training should be identified as mandatory.

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 specific training for the Democracy and Standards Committee.
- b) Reviews the current list of mandatory training for Councillors and identifies whether there is a need for this to be updated.

3.2 *Reasons for Recommendations*

3.2.1 The recommendations are intended 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.

3.2.2 At its meeting held in July 2022, the Committee resolved that refresher training for Members of Planning Committees and the Licensing Committee should be mandatory. The work programme of the Committee details that the October 2022 meeting of the Committee will review the list of mandatory training.

4. Report Background

Member Development

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

Member Development Training Programme

4.3 As reported to the meeting of the Committee in January 2022, the Councillor Induction Programme was designed for both returning and newly elected councillors.

4.4 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.

4.5 The member training programme takes place mainly remotely using the online audio and video system – Zoom. The sessions continue well attended; details of the main session and attendance statistics are attached at **Appendix A**. It is highlighted that attendance statistics are not recorded for briefing sessions. The majority of training and briefing sessions are recorded and stored in a Teams Channel that Members can access.

4.6 Training, including any refresher training, for members of both the Planning Committees and Licensing Committees is mandatory. All Members are required to attend the mandatory Code of Conduct training.

4.7 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

4.8 As reported to the meeting of Committee held in July 2022, 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 and identify whether there is a need for specific training for the Democracy and Standards Committee.
- 5.2 The Committee is asked to review the current list of mandatory training for Councillors and identify whether there is a need for this to be updated.

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 and 28 July 2022