

Second Monitor of Member Training and Development

Summary

1. This report informs members of the take up to date at events offered in the second half of 2009/2010 together with a summary of feedback received.
2. It should be noted that this report is being brought to the steering group early to ensure that any relevant information can be fed into the draft outline programme of development opportunities for 2010/2011 also being considered at this meeting
3. The final attendance figures and feedback from training for April and May will be brought to the June meeting of this steering group

Background

4. The Council has put in place effective systems for recording the data it holds in respect of development activities offered to members and this Steering Group has undertaken to monitor both take-up and feedback bi-annually.

Monitoring of Take-Up of Training & Development

5. In January of this year Council introduced an annual minimum requirement relating to the number of development activities Executive/Non Executive members should attend. Council agreed that Executive members should attend a minimum of 12 development sessions and Non-Executive Members a minimum of 8 sessions during the course of a year;
6. Details of Members' attendance levels at all events offered and activities undertaken in the second half of 2009/2010, as covered under the Councils' agreed standards, are set out in Annex A to this report;

Analysing Take-Up

7. Take up of development opportunities varies according to the nature of the training. Generally, training events targeted at members of a particular

committee, e.g. Scrutiny or Planning attract a higher level of attendees than events which focus on specific skills such as chairing meetings, dealing with the media etc.

8. Annex A shows that:

- 19 Non Exec Members have achieved the minimum target of 8 qualifying 'sessions' this year and 14 of those have exceeded the target
- 4 Executive Members have achieved the minimum target of 12 qualifying this year
- 1 Executive Member has not undertaken any qualifying events or activities;
- 8 Non-Executive Members have not undertaken any qualifying events or activities;

9. In July 2010, the results of take-up by Members and their performance in meeting the appropriate agreed targets for 2009/10 will be reported to Council. At the same time, Members Services will publish those statistics on the Council's website.

10. In accordance with the Steering Groups role, Members may wish to consider how they will encourage Members within their Groups who have not attended any qualifying events or activities to take advantage of the remaining sessions on offer throughout April and May.

Evaluating the Core Programme (including in year additions)

11. In addition to the monitoring of take up at development events another key aspect to measuring the success and effectiveness of the development sessions on offer is measured through feedback received from attendees.

12. Details of feedback received between November and March relating to development activities included in the core programme are summarised in Annex B.

Summary of Feedback

13. The session held on Local Government Finance was well received by members who found it enjoyable and aimed at the right level. The training could be offered in the next programme, however it may be advisable to postpone running this session again until after the 2011 elections in order to maximise attendance.

14. The expected Revisions to the Code of Conduct did not materialise, however the Interim Head of Civic Legal and Democratic Services took the

decision to run with the session as planned. The training focused instead on common issues raised in relation to the Code. Attendance was much higher than expected though predominantly Parish Councils. Feedback was very positive however delegates suggested that more 'practical' examples could be incorporated into the session along with more time for discussion at the end. In response to the feedback and requests for similar training in the future, another session is proposed for later this summer with particular focus on Complaints Hearings and Conduct. The session will be delivered by the new Head of Civic Legal and Democratic Services

15. The Theatre Work-Shop around Member/Officer relationships received the most positive feedback of all events offered to date. Although attendance figures were disappointing, those who took part thought it an excellent way of engaging members and officers in a very delicate area. There was an equal mix of participation from officers and members with participants enjoying the interactive style and the opportunity to break down some of the barriers between members and officers in an informal setting. Feedback from the session also included suggestions for follow up sessions on Members rights to personal information on behalf of constituents and scale of enquiries (how much work is involved).
16. In line with feedback received in the last monitor, there were further comments relating to the room temperature, particularly at the Mansion House. These have been taken on board and in future, training & development events held at the Mansion House will be limited to the warmer months at members request. Training in the Committee Rooms at the Guildhall will continue throughout the year but care will be taken to ensure that the room temperature is set at a comfortable level before the training commences.

Options

- 17.(a) To refer the findings of this report to Standards Committee as part of an annual evaluation monitor to be subsequently considered by Full Council
- (b) To suggest any amendments prior to referral of the report to Standards Committee

Corporate Priorities

18. Monitoring take up of development events and evaluating the core programme directly supports the Council's Corporate aim of providing of strong leadership, supporting and developing people and encouraging improvement in everything we do.

Implications

19. There are no known implications associated with the contents of this report other than any equalities implications arising from the attendance monitor and evaluation of development events offered to date.

Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the contents of this report other than if the Steering Group were not to refer the report to Standards Committee, thus being in breach of the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group agreed by Full Council

Recommendation

21. Members are asked to comment on the contents of the report and to refer them to Standards Committee for consideration as set out in para 17 above.

Reason

22. In order to comply with the monitoring arrangements set out in the Steering Group's Terms of Reference as approved by Council.

Contact Details

Author:

Amanda Oxley
Senior Member Support Officer

Dawn Steel
Democratic Services Manager

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Alison Lowton
Interim Head of Civic Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved Date 26/032010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None.

Annexes:

Annex A –Attendance Levels Monitor
Annex B – Summary of Evaluation of Core Programme events