

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Outcomes from the Member Training & Development Survey

Summary

1. This report sets out the outcomes from the recently undertaken Member Training & Development survey. Members are asked to comment on the outcomes, which are summarised in **Annex A** to this report.

Background

2. At a meeting of the Member Development Steering Group held on 12th October 2011 the Steering Group agreed that a survey of Member's training and development needs should take place biannually. This happened for the first time in January 2012. All Members of the Council were sent a letter which included a list of training and development sessions they had personally attended between 6th May 2011 and 31st January 2012 along with a copy of the survey for completion.

Consultation

3. All Members of the Council have been asked for their views on the training provided to date and what they may like to see included in the Core Training Programme for the municipal year 2012/13.

Options

4. Members are asked to comment on the information within this report and its associated annex. In addition to this they are asked to confirm that, in the future the survey takes place in September and March of each municipal year.

Analysis

5. To date 18 Members have responded to the survey and a summary of their responses is at **Annex A** to this report.

6. Some of the key themes emerging from the comments received were as follows:
7. Timing – many of those who responded expressed a preference for late afternoon/early evening sessions to fit around work commitments, with one Member suggesting sessions should start at 6pm. In response to this Democratic Services are very aware of Members other commitments (personal, work and Council) and try very hard to put on sessions when the most Members are likely to be available (usually starting late afternoon/evening) – however there is, unfortunately, no ‘one size’ fits all solution to this.
8. E-learning – there have been a couple of comments around increasing the amount of e-learning. E-learning opportunities are advertised in the core programme booklet (which was issued twice this municipal year – in May and September 2011). However, it is acknowledged by Democratic Services that more could be done to promote these opportunities.
 - Providing different levels of training (i.e. beginner, intermediate, experienced) and acknowledging that more longstanding Members will, in some cases, have different training needs to newly elected Members. Newly elected Members also had a wish for some of the subjects covered this municipal year to be covered in more depth next year but at the same time avoiding repetition.
 - Sourcing more regional training (providing that this is affordable)
9. The following were identified by Members as possible subjects for future training sessions:
 - Retention of updates in relation to statutory functions (for example planning & licensing)
 - How to use Facebook, Twitter & blogs
 - How to deal with the press & media
 - Ward work and how to help your residents
 - Fundraising
 - IT
 - Public speaking
 - Note taking
 - Mentoring skills
 - How to make scrutiny really work

- Council procedures (motions & amendments, 3 minute speaking rule, applying to speak at a Council meetings, decision sessions and the calling-in process)
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Social enterprise and working with third sector providers
 - More detailed external short course options for the individual portfolio areas
 - Budget process and timings
 - Councillor Call for Action
 - Safeguarding/Corporate Parenting
10. All the suggestions above will be addressed or considered for inclusion within the core programme for 2012/13. However, it cannot be guaranteed that sessions on all of these will be offered, especially for those where there maybe a significant cost involved.
 11. Where issues raised affect only one individual, or we know we cannot provide what they are asking for, the Members in question will be contacted directly.
 12. Members are also asked to give consideration to when they might like the next survey to take place. September and March are the suggested months. September, because in an induction year, this part of the core programme will have been completed and therefore feedback can be given; and early March, 6 months later, which would then feed into the next core programme put together in April.

Council Plan

13. Providing training and development to its Members demonstrates the Council's commitment to well trained and knowledgeable Members, in turn, making informed decisions relating to the new key priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Implications

14. There are no direct implications associated with this report, other than the fact that the annual training programme for Members is supported by the Member Development Budget.
15. There are no known HR, legal or other implications associated with the contents of this report, other than the budgetary commitments referred to and the staffing resources to support implementation of the annual core training and development programme.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report. However there will be risks that the decision making process could be undermined if Members are not provided with enough relevant training/information to allow them to be fully informed prior to making decisions.

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to
- Note and comment upon the survey and the responses to it (Annex A refers)
 - Approve the timings of September and March for further surveys to take place
- Reason: In order to ensure that Members views are considered when developing new training and development programmes.

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Report
Approved



Date Insert Date

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A Summary of responses received