

COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 17

Ward: N/A

Portfolio: Services and Finance

Report Author(s): Cllr Peter Bradshaw,
Chairman of the Member
Development Group

Date: 9 May 2016

SUBJECT: **Member Development Activity During 2015-2016 and
Member Development for 2016-2017**

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Report Sign off	Seen by:	Name	Date
	Legal	Donna Nolan	26.04.16
	Finance	N/A	
	Chief Executive	Stuart Brown	26.04.16
	Corporate Manager	Donna Nolan	26.04.16
Summary:	<p>This report provides an update on Member development activity during 2015-16 and Member development for 2016-17 to assist in delivery of the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The report recommends Members suggest any additional areas for inclusion in the programme.</p> <p>The Cabinet considered a report on the topic of Member development on 11 April 2016. Suggestions included that the Council investigate increased use of distance learning opportunities, more training for Parish Councillors on the topic of planning and a desire to aim for the Council to be re-accredited by the Member Development Charter in 2017.</p>		
Recommendation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To note the outcomes following Member development activity during 2015-16, andb) Suggest topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme for 2016-17.c) To accept the suggestions made by Cabinet.		

<p>Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities:</p>	<p>Member training and development is in accordance with policy and assists in the delivery of the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Member Development and Training forms part of the operation plan for Corporate Support Services.</p>
<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>Member training and development is delivered by a mix of Officer time using in-house resources and from externally funded sources. The programme will be delivered within the resources allocated.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p>	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Members of Planning and Licensing Boards are required to attend designated training to ensure they are up to date with current legislation and practice. Decisions made by Members who have not attended such training could be open to challenge.</p>
<p>Value for Money:</p>	<p>Effective Member development ensures that the Council makes quality decisions and enables Councillors to be better equipped to deliver the vision and priorities for the Council and to be effective community leaders.</p>
<p>Equalities Implications:</p>	<p>These proposals will provide equal access to Member development opportunities for all Members.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:</p>	<p>Risk – lack of training results in a lower member capacity for involvement and leadership. Consequence – Reputational and loss of momentum in driving forward organisational improvement and development. Probability – Low risk. Impact – Low risk. Treatment – Provision of directed and supported development. A planned programme of identified development needs to assist the Council in the delivery of its priorities set out in the corporate Plan.</p>

INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of Member development is to support both the individual needs of Members and assist Members to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan.
2. Elected Members are central in delivering the vision for the authority and as such the Council needs to support its Members in carrying out their roles. Member development is one way the Council provides support to enable Councillors to be better equipped to deliver the vision and priorities for the Council and to be effective community leaders.

BACKGROUND

3. All Councillors are advocates for their communities and "case workers" for their individual constituents. As a result of the Localism Act the role of the Councillor has become more important and the demands placed on them have increased. Their effectiveness depends on the quality of development and level of support they receive. Development in all Councillor roles is essential to enable them to succeed.
4. In 2007 Cabinet agreed to form a group to monitor and influence Member development. That group, known as the Member Development Group (MDG) currently consists of Councillors Peter Bradshaw (Chairman), Tom Killen, Roy Mackenzie, Graham Noel and John Osman. The group meets on an ad hoc basis to consider training topics, any Member satisfaction surveys, a review of the member Development Strategy and a review of the Member development budget.

Member development activity during 2015-2016

5. Attached to the report as Appendix 1 is a table to show the member development sessions that have been held during 2015-16. This includes the induction programme of Members following the election in May 2015. The outcomes are intended to show the positive results of member development sessions.
6. In June 2014 the Council was re-awarded Member Development Charter Status as organised by SW Councils and the IDeA. The status is valid until June 2017 when the Council will be assessed again should Members wish to continue with the scheme.
7. Efforts have continued to make Member development sessions more interesting and convenient, as well as relevant. Promotion of each topic is carried out before the sessions take place. Current figures show that the average attendance of Councillors to general development sessions is in the region of 55%, which is about equal to the attendance figure last year (53%). This is particularly encouraging as Members have had an intense induction period since the election.
8. Where appropriate Parish Councils and Officers are encouraged to attend development sessions along with the District Councillors.

9. The MDG continue to look at alternative learning opportunities for instance online learning, an example being www.moderncouncillor.com.
10. By way of disseminating information, Councillors are now encouraged to write a summary report of any external training which can be inserted in the Mendip News in Brief.
11. By way of individual support and development, the Chief Executive has carried Ward Walks with most of the Councillors. These have proven very productive for both parties.

Outline Member Development Programme 2016-2017

12. Topics for the Member Development Programme in 2016-2017 will be based on the following areas:
 - a) Requirements identified in Members Development Surveys.
 - b) Requirements identified by the Corporate Management Team.
 - c) Any identified needs of individual Members
 - d) Mandatory training relating to Regulatory Services and Built Environment
 - e) Development needs arising from external factors such as new legislation or other changes affecting local government.
13. The Member Support Officer will identify the most appropriate way of providing the training. Some will be through briefings/workshops, but other techniques such as e-learning may also be employed. Such development sessions will continue to be available both in the day and early evening to make development more accessible to members.
14. Individual Members will continue to have opportunities to attend one-off external seminars/conferences where these help meet corporate objectives and enhance skills and knowledge.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

15. No options have been considered as the Council is committed to undertaking a programme of self improvement. It will be necessary to review the Policy and Strategy from time to time and update as necessary to reflect best practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. a) To note the outcomes following Member development activity during 2015-2016, and
b) Suggest topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme for 2016-2017.
c) To accept the suggestions made by Cabinet.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17. To enable Councillors to have opportunities to update their knowledge and learn new skills to enable them to play an effective role in delivering the priorities for the Council.

Contact Officer: Donna Nolan/Claire Dicken

Extension: 210/341

E-mail: donna.nolan@mendip.gov.uk
claire.dicken@mendip.gov.uk

There are no background papers

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING EVALUATION 2015/2016

Date	Topic*	Percentage of invitees that attended**	Objectives	Outcomes
13 May 2015	Welcome Evening	64%	<p>Elected Members met together for the first time. The event included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions • Officer Structure • Political Structure • What’s special about Mendip and what does the future hold • Support for Councillors • Key roles of Councillors and Conduct • Role of Councillors in the Ward • An opportunity to complete essential administration 	Members had an opportunity to meet each other and be formally welcomed to the Council.
14 May 2015	Introduction to Corporate Management Team (CMT)	36%	Members were invited to meet with the members of the Corporate Management Team to learn about each area of the council in turn. This included Council finances.	Members met key Members of staff at the earliest opportunity in order to establish them in their role as an elected Member as soon as possible following the election.
15 May 2015	Market Place Event	45%	This session gave Officers of the Council and its partners an opportunity to lay out their service in the form of a market.	<p>Members learnt about each service in an informal setting and met the Officers who carry out services on behalf of the Council. Literature and goodie bags were also provided.</p> <p>Parish Council representatives were</p>

Date	Topic*	Percentage of invitees that attended**	Objectives	Outcomes
				also invited to attend the market place.
19 May 2015	Information Governance	28%	Members were given an opportunity to understand compliance threats, their management and mitigation. They were further given the 'Big Picture' of how the Council protects data with a Governance Risk and Compliance (GRC) framework.	Members are required to handle data each day and this training has helped to ensure that such data is kept safe.
20 May 2015	Planning Fundamental and Referral Scheme and Planning Enforcement	40%	All Members were given the opportunity to have an introduction into the planning service and the Member referral scheme for handling applications.	Planning is one of the Council's major functions which requires constant member involvement. This course ensures that planning applications are handled in accordance with the requirements.
21 May 2015	An Introduction to Handling the Media	43%	<p>All Members were invited to attend this course which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing your reputation and the media • Basic rules of engagement • Getting your Key Message across • 'Taking Control' • The use of Social Media 	The Council's reputation and the reputation of individual Councillors is better protected as a result of Councillors having this knowledge.
27 May 2015	Planning Board Training	40%	<p>All Members were invited to attend this course which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Board – The Basics; 	The Planning Board could continue with its schedule of business as a good number of Councillors had the

Date	Topic*	Percentage of invitees that attended**	Objectives	Outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting point for decision-making; • The development plan; • Non-material considerations; • Role of planners; • Reports to Planning Board; • Role of the lead officer and legal advisor; • Making the decision – key points; • Overturns – key points; • Preparing for Planning Board meetings; • Consequences and risks of planning decisions; • Granting permission • Refusing permission 	relevant knowledge.
1 June 2015	Tour of Glastonbury Festival site as a green field	23%	This session gave Members an opportunity to hear about the history of the event and the statistics involved as well as a coach trip to the site before the event began.	Members have a useful understanding of the complexities of such an event occurring within the district, including the implications for the licensing and environmental health services.
3 June 2015	Media Training for the Chair of Committees	67%	<p>Members of Cabinet and Chair's of Committees were invited to attend this course which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the media • The dos and don'ts of interviews • The importance of planning • Understanding the importance of building relationships with journalists 	Those Councillors most likely to come into contact with the media on behalf of the Council have the knowledge to handle the media

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing key messages • Handling difficult and sometimes hostile questioning 	
8 June 2015	Introduction to Council Finance	51%	The Council's Section 151 Officer and his assistant gave an overview of the Council's current funding streams and spending plans.	Councillors know how the Council is funded and in some respects its financial limitations
11 June 2015	Equalities and the Role of Members as Community Leaders	47%	The aim of this session was to inform Members of their legal responsibility around the Equality Act 2010. It provided Members with a good grounding on how decisions will affect people protected by the legislation and questions they should ask themselves. The Equality Act also makes Elected Members Community Leaders	Councillors have been democratically elected to represent the interests of the people and the Council and as such they are uniquely placed to ensure the Council does not discriminate people.
15 June 2015	Licensing Hearing Training, held at TDBC offices	100%	This course covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key principles of the Licensing Act 2003; • Section 182 National Guidance; • The inter-relationship of The Licensing Act 2003 and other legislation; and • The conduct of hearings including evidential burden and providing reasons 	A number of Members of the Licensing Board fully understand Councillors' powers and duties at hearings
17 June 2015	Planning Board Training	75%	This internal training session explained the functions and role of the Planning	The Council was able to continue making decisions on matters relating

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			Board as set out in the Council's Constitution.	to planning as soon as possible after the election.
22 June 2015	Scrutiny Board Training	66%	This internal training session explained the functions and role of the Scrutiny Board as set out in the Council's Constitution including the call in procedure.	The Scrutiny Board was able to re-establish meaningful scrutiny of the Council's decisions as soon as possible after the election.
26 June 2015	Glastonbury Festival Site Visit	34%	Members were given the opportunity to visit the Glastonbury Festival. This event is the largest of its kind in Europe and is held in the heart of the Mendip district and licensed by the Council.	New and existing Members were able to see firsthand all aspects of the impact the festival has on the district.
6 July 2015	Housing Options and Housing Benefits	Not available	<p>This two part course contained information on:</p> <p>Housing Options – Housing Register, Homelessness and Housing Options, Private Sector Housing. Questions and answers sessions.</p> <p>Housing Benefits – Introduction to Universal Credit in Mendip. Question and answers session on who can and how to apply for benefits.</p>	Housing and housing benefits impact on a great number of residents. Councillors are now better placed to give advice.
15 July 2015	Audit Committee Training	Not available	This internal training session explained the functions and role of the Audit Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution.	The Council was able to continue its audit function as soon as possible after the election.

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27 July 2015	Assets of Community Value applications	Not available	This internal training session was offered to members of the Corporate Asset Management Group. It aimed to set out how the Council should deal with applications for assets of community value and how this differed from the role of Local Planning Authority	The Council is able to handle applications for assets of community value.
16 and 17 September 2015	Licensing Board Training	Not available	Members of the Licensing Board were invited to attend this course which was presented by Professor Roy Light. The Professor outlined points of licensing law and the Council's responsibilities.	The Council was able to continue its Licensing function as soon as possible after the election.
25 September 2015	Safeguarding Through Licensing	100%	The Chairman of the Licensing Board attended this event which provided a forum for discussion and learning amongst key stakeholders in relation to safeguarding issues around children and other vulnerable people where licensing can make a difference.	The Licensing Board benefits from the additional knowledge that its Chair has acquired.
2 October 2015	1 of 4 Mandatory Planning Board training session - Overview	100%	This course was the first of 4 sessions which were considered as mandatory for Members of the Planning Board. The sessions were delivered by Trevor Roberts Associates who were held in high regard as a leading trainer on planning issues for officers and Councillors.	The knowledge gained in this series of courses ensured that the Council was able to continue making sound decisions on planning issues.
21 October 2015	Audit Committee Training, held at Haynes	Not available	This course was sponsored by the South West and Devon Audit Partnerships.	Members gained knowledge on how the internal and external auditors

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	Motor Museum		Amongst the topics discussed was governance challenges and future threats, what Members should know about fraud, theft and bribery and the Section 151 Officer's role.	could support their responsibilities for corporate assurance, as well as having an opportunity for useful networking.
5 November 2015	Assets of Community Value	30%	This course aimed to provide Members with an overview of the Regulations relating to Assets of Community Value and the process employed by Mendip District Council to determine nominations as well as 'myth-busting' what being a nominated asset means.	<p>Ward Members have a role to play in the determination process; this training equipped members to deliver that role as well as being in an informed position with regards to the Regulations and signposting any queries they may receive from your constituents.</p> <p>14 Parish Council representatives were also able to attend</p>
6 November 2015	A Future for the Past - Conservation	100%	Two of the Council's Members that are involved in conservation services were able to attend this course which was delivered by the SW Councils at the MShed, Bristol. The workshop offered opportunities for new and existing councillors to network whilst gaining essential knowledge and experiencing the historic environment for themselves.	Councillors have a vital role in protecting this valuable asset and making sure it has a role in the 21st Century – for people, for the economy and for the environment.
30 November 2015	2 of 4 Mandatory Planning Board session - Appeals	100%	This course was the second of 4 sessions which were considered as mandatory for Members of the Planning Board. The sessions were delivered by Trevor	The knowledge gained in this series of courses ensured that the Council was able to continue making sound decisions on planning issues.

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			Roberts Associates who were held in high regard as a leading trainer on planning issues for officers and councillors.	
3 December 2015	Equalities	17%	This course aimed to inform Members of their legal responsibility around the Equality Act 2010. It provided Members with a good grounding on how decisions would affect people protected by the legislation and questions they should ask themselves.	The Equality Act also made Elected Members Community Leaders and this session will go into more detail about this.
14 December 2015	Ombudsman and Complaints	40%	David Pollard, Assistant Ombudsman was invited to deliver this member development session. It aimed to provide an overview and awareness raising session on Local Government Ombudsman complaints and the work of the LGO.	Members are now aware of how the Ombudsman is organised, how the Ombudsman deals with complaints and what Ombudsman decisions mean for the Council
7 January 2016	Warmer Improved Somerset Homes	21%	This course aimed to inform Members how the Warmer Improved Somerset Homes organisation could support Mendip residents struggling with fuel bills and other energy issues.	Members are now aware of Who CSE are. (Centre for Sustainable Energy), the main causes of fuel poverty, why the WISH project was started and how WISH can improve the situation for many Mendip residents
13 January 2016	3 of 4 Mandatory Planning Board session Propriety and Good Practice	100%	This course was the third of 4 sessions which were considered as mandatory for Members of the Planning Board. The sessions were delivered by Trevor	The knowledge gained in this series of courses ensured that the Council was able to continue making sound decisions on planning issues.

Date	Topic*	Percentage of invitees that attended**	Objectives	Outcomes
			Roberts Associates who were held in high regard as a leading trainer on planning issues for officers and councillors.	
25 February 2016	Safeguarding and Child Exploitation		<p>This course aimed to inform Members about the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Safeguarding; who's responsibility is it? • What is Child Sexual exploitation; who's responsibility is it? • Signs of Abuse/CSE • Who may the abuser be? • How to report A Safeguarding issue 	The knowledge gained has ensured the council is aware of its responsibility with regard to safeguarding.
11 March 2016	4 of 4 Mandatory Planning Board session – Obligations and Conditions		This course was the last of 4 sessions which were considered as mandatory for Members of the Planning Board. The sessions were delivered by Trevor Roberts Associates who were held in high regard as a leading trainer on planning issues for officers and councillors.	The knowledge gained in this series of courses ensured that the Council was able to continue making sound decisions on planning issues.

* Course notes are available on most of these topics, for a copy please contact Claire Dicken at Claire.Dicken@mendip.gov.uk

** It is not always possible to invite all Members to every training opportunity.