



Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee	Date:	16 May 2019
Report title:	AG/2018/26 - Member Development Update		
Report from:	Jessica Crowe, Monitoring Officer		
Ward/Areas affected:	Borough Wide		
Chair of Committee/Lead Member:	Councillor Richard Clifton		
Author(s)/Contact Number(s):	Fiona Bywaters, Committee Services Team Leader, 0208 770 5122		
Corporate Plan Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Informed Choices 		
Open/Exempt:	Open		
Signed:		Date:	30 April 2019

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the Council's member development programme, setting out how the Council is ensuring that all members are fully aware of their obligation to follow the Nolan Principles and to help them meet the standards of behaviour and conduct that the public have a right to expect from their elected members.

2. Recommendations

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and comment on the member development update and make any recommendations with regards to promoting members' obligations to uphold the Nolan Principles and wider standards of behaviour.

3. Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Standards Committee held on December 2015, members considered an update report and requested that a similar report be considered at each meeting. The Audit and Governance Committee, now responsible for the standards regime, last considered an update at the meeting held on 31 January 2019.
- 3.2 Member development provision shall seek to categorise development activities relevant to the different roles of councillors and to assist members to identify their own individual development needs. It is recognised that members come from a variety of backgrounds, with different skills,



knowledge and expertise. Individuals will have individual learning needs and styles. Many members also work full time. With that in mind, a flexible approach is required and feedback is regularly sought from members.

4. Issues

Digital Skills Survey

4.1 In response to the inaugural digital skills survey, the following actions are underway:

- Promotion of the wider G-Suite apps and their applicable uses to members, including Google tips in the weekly Member Information Bulletin.
 - Tips on both gmail and calendar use have been disseminated on a weekly basis via the bulletin. A 'special edition' collates all the tips within a theme and is distributed to members at the end of each series.
 - Special edition - Gmail Tips - 13% open rate (7 members). Due to the very low open rate, an article was included in a following regular bulletin (37% open rate, 4 clicks) to alert members to the availability of the tips on the Councillor Connect website
- Support the transition to paperless for those members either interested now, or in the future.
 - New methods of report and agenda management are being explored to assist 'paperless' committee chairs. An updated version of the Mod.Gov app is anticipated shortly and will be promoted among members.
- Promotion of the Councillor Connect internal resource.
 - The Councillor Connect internal website has been subject to a 'refresh' and members informed via a member information bulletin article (37% open rate, 7 clicks).

The following actions are outstanding:

- Confirmation of councillor landline use and promotion of facility to divert to mobile.
- Promotion of facilities available to members, such as cloud printing and chromeboxes.
- Promotion of the Mod.Gov app for the viewing of committee agendas and minutes online.
- Individual sending of the digital handbook to each member and promotion via group leaders.
- Explore the opportunity for a member development refresher session (or webinar) on the subject of information governance and data controller responsibilities.

Member Development Strategy

- 4.2 The member development strategy outlines five skills types required by the 21st Century Councillor:

Foundational skills	Practical	Speed-reading, chairing a meeting, public speaking, media training.
	Knowledge based	Policy and portfolio areas and committee roles.
Relational skills	Connective	Influencing, negotiating, listening, connecting and story-telling.
	Digital	Use of new technologies as communicative resources.
	Reflective	To cope with the demands of the position.

- 4.3 These five skills have been taken into account when developing the following programme for members, which was due to commence in September 2018:

Date	Session
17 September 2018 *Postponed	Personal Safety for Councillors
8 October 2018	Chairing Skills
10 December 2018	Working with Officers
04 February 2019	Being an Effective Councillor / Influencing & Resilience Skills
11 March 2019	Giving Effective Speeches and Presentations

**Postponed due to sudden illness of facilitator.*

Date	Session
10 June 2019	Anti Bullying
9 September 2019	Personal Safety for Councillors
18 November 2019	[Topic TBC]
6 January 2020	[Topic TBC]
16 March 2020	[Topic TBC]

- 4.4 The member development provision will continue to be assessed against 3 key performance indicators:

	Attendance (35%)	Feedback Completion (75%)	Helpful to role (80%)
Chairing Skills	26% (14)	57% (8)	75% (6)
Working with Officers	22% (12)	8% (1)	100% (1)
Effective Councillor / Influencing & Resilience	24% (13)	46% (6)	67% (4)
Giving Effective Speeches and Presentations	36% (17)	53% (7)	100% (7)

Regulatory Member Development

- 4.5 Due to the quasi-judicial nature of regulatory committees, it is highly important that suitable training is provided to support members in an effective decision-making process.

Planning Committee

- 4.6 As previously reported, a further area for focus is a specific member development programme for members of the Planning Committee. Following the Planning Peer Review in 2015, the council made a commitment (Full Council, November 2016) that Planning Committee members' attendance at planning training sessions be monitored via a point scoring system in order to qualify to sit on the Committee. Members must attend at least 75% of planning committee training delivered in a municipal year and commit to undertake any training missed within 1 year.
- 4.7 In respect of feedback from those who attended the last session on 30 January 2019 (*covering the pre-application process and the life of an application, and reflecting back on appeal decisions*), from the 6 responses received (from 8 attendees):

- 100% would recommend the session to their colleagues.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the session met their expectations.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the session was well organised and easy to follow.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the speakers were engaging and informative.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the time allocated for the session was sufficient.

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that the session will help them in their role.

4.8 Across 2018/19, ten topics have been covered by the programme. Attendance of planning committee members and substitutes has been monitored and of ten committee members:

- 7 have completed 100% of the training,
- 2 have completed 70%, and
- 1 has completed 50%.

Of the five substitutes: some Members were appointed to the committee after the start of the municipal year so were not in role to attend all sessions. Of the same ten topics:

- 2 have completed 80%,
- 1 has completed 70%,
- 1 has completed 40%,
- 1 has completed 30% and
- 1 has completed 10%.

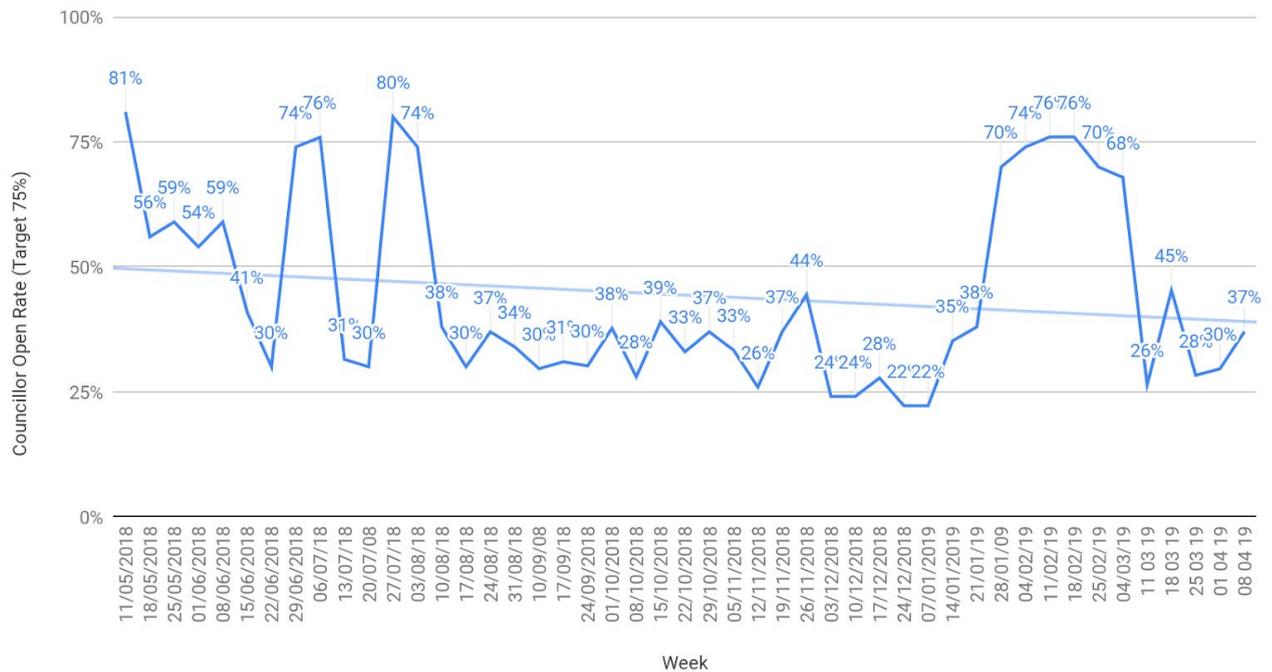
This indicates that a number of Members will now need to catch up with the missed training sessions within a year. Members are invited to comment on attendance (in light of the planning peer review) and how 'catch-up sessions' might best be delivered as well as make suggestions for the 2019/20 programme.

Resources: Member Information Bulletin

- 4.9 The Members' Information Bulletin has been published in its new format on a weekly basis since January 2017 - reaching its 100th edition on the 24 December 2018. The purpose of the bulletin is to provide a single source of news to Members, reducing email traffic and collating all updates into a weekly e-mail. The bulletin also provides useful links to meeting agendas as well as licensing and planning applications.
- 4.10 The collective 'open rate' of the bulletin for Members has a target KPI of 75% and performance against this since the 2018 local elections, is illustrated by the graph below:



Councillor Open Rate (Target 75%) vs Week



4.11 At the last committee meeting, the target open rate was reported as having been achieved just three times since the election. Overall, the open rate has averaged at 45% for regular editions of the bulletin but a peak is clearly evidenced across the month of February 2019, where the target was achieved on more than one occasion. No particular explanation can be given and members are invited to comment on this higher open rate.

4.12 With regards to the open rate of ‘special editions’ (i.e. those which are unscheduled), this tends to see a higher performance:

- 25 January 2019 (Special: Standing orders) - 31%
- 20 February 2019 (Special: By-election announced) - 74%
- 4 March 2019 (Special: Intro to new Chief Executive) - 83%
- 29 March 2019 (Special: Google tips) - 13%

4.13 Concerns therefore remain from previous reports that though officers may believe that Members have been provided with information and updates, in many cases, that content is not being accessed on a consistent basis. Members of the Committee are invited to advise on how Members can be encouraged and supported to access the information required to fulfil their responsibilities.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 As this report is predominantly for information there are no specific options for consideration. However, Members of the Committee are invited to comment and make suggestions on the Member Development Programme and the approach outlined.

6. Impacts and Implications

Financial

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 6.2 There are no legal implications arising specifically from this report, although ill-informed or otherwise poor decision-making by Members can carry the risk of successful legal challenge to the basis for a decision, so it is important for the Council to be assured that Members are being offered and are taking up necessary development and advice opportunities.

7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
N/A	

Background documents
None

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 30 April 2019
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	No	N/A
Legal	No	N/A
Equality Impact Assessment	No	N/A

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