



Report for:	<b>Member Development Steering Group</b>
Date of meeting:	<b>01 October 2015</b>
PART:	<b>1</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Annual Member Training Report 2014-2015</b>
Contact:	M Anderson, Corporate Support Team Leader (Democracy) T Coston, Member Support Officer Councillor Taylor Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group
Purpose of report:	(1) To provide an update on Member Training for 2014/15  (2) To illustrate the ongoing commitment to delivering Member Development
Recommendations	(1) To comment on and note the report.

## **Background**

- 1.1 Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) has always strived to provide training for its elected members. An annual development programme has been produced and delivered.
- 1.2 The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG), continues to meet quarterly and leads Member Development at the Council. It is supported by the Corporate Support Team Leader - Democracy.
- 1.3 As part of the Chief Executive's priorities identified back in 2009/10, it was decided that DBC would aim to achieve Elected Member Charter Status. The Council achieved this status in December 2010 and although the accreditation has expired, has continued to show commitment to this.
- 1.4 The Member Charter was a statement of commitment to develop and support elected members. The processes put in place to achieve the Charter have helped the Council adopt a structured approach to Councillor development and to build elected member capacity. This is particularly important given the ever changing skills and competencies essential to fulfil the requirements of being a councillor.

## **2. Induction 2015**

- 2.1 Two identical induction days were held for re-elected and newly elected members on Thursday 21 May and Saturday 6 June. Chief Officers provided presentations on the Constitution, Code of Conduct, Regeneration of the Borough, an introduction to Local Government Finance and an overview on what's happening in local Government locally and nationally.
- 2.2 During the lunch break, each department in the council delivered a service market which gave members the opportunity to meet various staff members, distribute leaflets/information, and answer any questions they may have had.
- 2.3 A coach tour of the borough was also provided. The majority of the feedback was positive and everything went as planned. Member Support now acts as an initial contact and is available to help newly elected councillors until they feel settled.

## **3. Member Development Training Programme**

- 3.1 Attendance at Member Development sessions remained at a steady level for the first half of the year but unfortunately dropped for the second half of the year leading up to the elections and the end of the member's four year term. Evaluations received are proving very helpful for the facilitators and helps towards organising future training events. This level of involvement by Councillors demonstrates their continuous commitment to their personal development and the criteria needed to maintain the Member Charter level of performance.
- 3.2 The Council had a local Performance Indicator for 2014/15 '*Average number of training opportunities taken up per member is 3*'. Unfortunately the indicator was not achieved, but the average number of training opportunities taken up per member was 2.6.
- 3.3 The following development opportunities were provided between May 2014 – April 2015:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Housing Appeals Training 1:1	May 2014	1
New Build Site Visits	9 July 2014	8
Individual Electoral Registration	9 July 2014	21
Development Control 1:1	July 2014	3
Public Speaking	23 July 2014	9
Cupid Green & CCTV tour	24 July 2014	27 (+3 Town Cllrs)
I.T Skills	18 September 2014	3
Solving the Local Government Finance Jigsaw	23 October 2014	9
Understanding Local Government Finances	4 November 2014	12 (+1 Cllr from Hertsmere)
Emergency Planning Awareness	19 November 2014	7
Learn more about your Ward	26 November 2014	5
Audit Training	17 December 2014	5
Safeguarding Vulnerable adults and children	14 January 2015	9

Representing the Council on Outside Organisations	29 January 2015	5
Managing Difficult People and Situations	17 February 2015	5
Information Security / Data Protection	10 March 2015	6

3.4 You will see from the list above that some courses are arranged for members to have a 1:1 or for small groups to have a briefing with relevant officers; this year included Development Control and Housing Appeals.

3.5 Members are asked each year as to what areas they would like to see included in the annual training programme. This will ensure a Member focused training programme and one which responds to their needs. Once drafted, the programme will be agreed by the Steering Group. All officer requests are discussed by the group and then a way forward for each is agreed.

3.6 In order to assist with producing the 2014/15 training programme, all councillors were asked early in 2014 to complete a questionnaire which asked them to score themselves for various tasks/skills/abilities. Included in this, was a section for members to suggest topics they would like to see included in the forthcoming training programme. The questionnaires remained confidential and only the Corporate Support Team Leader- Democracy and 1 Member Support Officer had access to them.

Once received, any individual training needs were identified and relevant courses or 1:1's were arranged.

3.7 Then as agreed the MDSG considered the suggestions made for the training programme and prioritised the courses to be arranged for 2014/15.

#### **4. Member Development Budget**

4.1 During the years which do not have local elections, the Member Development budget is streamlined to £8,000. This year we have successfully kept within this budget.

4.2 The budget covered areas such as the LGA conference, courses held at Dacorum, courses individual Members requested to attend, hire of venues and specialist facilitators used for joint authority training.

4.3 In 2015/16 the budget has been increased to £11,000, to incorporate costs of essential training following the elections, the Induction process and Personal Development plans. Alongside this the training programme will also need to be delivered.

#### **5. Member Development Strategy 2012-2015**

5.1 A requirement of the Member Charter accreditation was to have a Member Development Strategy. A Strategy for 2012-2015 had been completed and was revised and amended during 2014 by the Member Development Steering Group.

- 5.2 The Strategy aims to set out why Councillors require training, how this will be delivered, the resources and support available to Member Training and details on the Steering Group which coordinates the training programme.  
Due to its expiry date, the strategy will be reviewed, in full, during 2015.

## **6. Hertfordshire Member Development Network**

- 6.1 Member Development Officers at DBC are part of the Hertfordshire Member Development Network Group, which meets quarterly.
- 6.2 This is a very successful group, which has been recognised by South East Employers as the leaders in networking and referred to as the Hertfordshire model. The group exchange examples of good training providers, give feedback on recent training events, seek advice and guidance on forthcoming projects and discuss future training topics. This is a great way for officers to increase their knowledge and expertise in Member Development. DBC hosted the meeting of this group in March, which was very successful and also had a training facilitator attend to discuss options for further joint learning and developing a structured programme for this.
- 6.3 Joint training has been held with local authorities and the Hertfordshire Member Development Network group have agreed to advertise all relevant training sessions to each other when spaces are still available. There is a standard charge for attending the course if they are being run by an external provider.

## **7. Future Plans and Considerations**

- 7.1 The first few months of the training programme for 2015-16 have been heavily populated by essential training required, following the borough elections. The remainder of the plan has been populated by requests received from officers and individual members.
- 7.2 Following the discussions which have taken place around the members Personal Development Plans (PDP), it was agreed that they would be carried out early 2016, having completed the induction programme and given members the opportunity to discover the areas which they want to pursue further.
- 7.3 Further work is continuing with other authorities to ensure that joint arrangements are in place to ensure a wide range of courses are being provided to our members. This also gives the councillors more opportunities to network with fellow colleagues.