

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Overview Scrutiny Committee
Date: 17 September 2020
Reporting officer: Chris Wakeford, Committee Services Officer (Scrutiny)
Subject: Scrutiny Training for Members

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the Scrutiny training that is currently available.

Recommendations:

1. The Committee are requested to consider the training options available and agree a proposed way forward.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair of the Committee requested that a report be presented to the Committee that outlines the current training options for Members on the topic of Scrutiny. This report outlines those options in section two and three of the report.

2. Local Government Association (LGA)

- 2.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) website contains a number of free workbooks that cover a wide range of subjects including Scrutiny and Scrutiny Finance, the links are set out below:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-workbook-scrutiny>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-workbook-scrutiny-finance>

- 2.2 The LGA also offer e-learning modules for Councillors, including one on Scrutiny. You usually have to register to access but, in response to Covid-19, the LGA have removed the need to register and have given open access but this does mean that anyone doing the training needs to take a screenshot of the completion certificate to prove they did it. Here is the link to the modules (the Scrutiny module is eleventh in the list)

<https://lga.melearning.university/course/view/1?gc=WMA7LFIA1FZCUC1QCVSK>

- 2.3 The LGA have been contacted about the possibility of remote Scrutiny training and we are awaiting further detail about this option.

3. Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)

- 3.1 CfPS have published a 'Good Scrutiny Guide' for Councillors that can be viewed here: <https://www.cfps.org.uk/?publication=the-good-scrutiny-guide>
The guide is written to complement the Government's Statutory Scrutiny Guidance which can be viewed here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-and-combined-authorities>
- 3.2 CfPS are currently running free online webinar sessions, You can view two recorded webinars one on 'Online Scrutiny Meetings for Councillors' and one on 'Finance Scrutiny' below:
<https://www.cfps.org.uk/watch-our-recorded-webinars/>
<https://www.cfps.org.uk/watch-our-recorded-webinar-finance-scrutiny/>
- 3.3 CfPS have also published a free guide to Scrutiny during the Covid-19 crisis. It covers the key arguments in favour of continued, robust member-led scrutiny in this time of crisis, and sets out an approach to provide that scrutiny in a way that is proportionate and fits within the constrained resources that councils will have at their disposal.
The guide can be viewed here:
<https://www.cfps.org.uk/?publication=covid-19-guide-2-scrutiny>
- 3.4 CfPS do offer Scrutiny Training for Councillors through a single, short evening training session, through multiple workshops, or through coaching and mentoring. CfPS have been contacted about the possibility of providing GBC Councillors with training and we are awaiting the options.

4. South East Employers (SEE)

- 4.1 SEE can provide all types of scrutiny training and usually develop a programme following a discussion of the key issues/areas of content with the Chair of Scrutiny or an appropriate officer.
- 4.2 The programme length is usually around 2 hours and a mixture of group discussion and facilitator input.
- 4.3 The fee is £750 plus VAT. A virtual session using Teams or Zoom is an option.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	There are no legal implications resulting from this report. The Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Overview Scrutiny Committee and the activities set out within this report are in line with this.
Finance and Value for Money	A Member Training budget is in place which has a budget of £5,150 each year which remains constant over the life of the Medium-term Financial Plan. All training provided for Members which incurs a cost will be delivered within this budget.
Risk Assessment	There is a risk to the council should Members not attend the training that is being provided. The training being provided will assist Members in their roles as councillors and in some cases, specifically in relation to their roles on Committees. As such, there is a risk that if Members do not attend the training they may not be properly trained in an area and therefore this may affect their ability to make sound decisions.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? No</p> <p>A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	The work of the Overview Scrutiny Committee is cross-cutting and therefore is likely to contribute towards all elements of the council's Corporate Plan.

Crime and Disorder	There are no Crime and Disorder implications with this report.
Digital and website implications	There are no digital and website implications with this report.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	There are no specific safeguarding children and vulnerable adults implications with this report.