

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 29 January 2024

Reporting officer: Committee Services Officer

Subject: Feedback on the Member Induction Programme 2023 & draft Member Training Plan for 2024/25.

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide the Cabinet with a summary of the training that has taken place as part of the Member Induction Programme 2023 and to outline the draft Member Training Plan for 2024/25.

Recommendations:

1. Cabinet note the Member Training attendance statistics and feedback on the Member Induction Programme for 2023.
2. Cabinet is asked to review the comments and suggestions received from the Overview Scrutiny Committee in Section 6 of the report and identify those it wishes to incorporate in either the Member Training Plan for 2024/25 or the next Member Induction Programme in 2027.
3. Cabinet approve the draft Member Training Plan 2024/25 set out in appendix four, subject to any amendments it makes.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report. The Member Training and Development Plan considers the quasi-judicial role of Members on the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee and the constitutional requirements around training, which has been built into the overall plan accordingly.
Finance and Value for Money	A Member Training budget is in place which has a budget of £4,750. All training provided for Members which incurs a cost will be delivered within this budget.
Corporate Plan	One Council: a well-run and innovative authority, defined by its skilled and valued workforce, committed to developing its local social impact.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with a summary of the training that has taken place during the Member Induction Programme 2023 (May – July 2023) and presents the draft Member Training Plan for 2024/25.

2. Member Induction Programme 2023 (May – July 2023)

2.1 Members received a wide-ranging induction process following the Local Elections in May 2023. In order to continue a comprehensive programme of training for members, a Member Training Plan for 2024/25 has now been developed.

2.2 During the Member Induction Programme, 28 training sessions were provided to Members on a wide range of topics. The table below provides a summary of attendance for each session held:

Training Session	Number of Attendees	Proportion of Members attending
Meet & Greet	19	48.7%
Basic Principles of Planning	12	30.7%
To Serve on the Planning Committee	11	28.2%
Code of Conduct & Declarations of Interest	11	28.2%
Historic Talk by Christoph Bull	8	20.5%
Gravesham's Heritage & Strategic Developments	8	20.5%
Licensing Act 2003	9	23%
Health and Safety	8	20.5%
Data Protection/GDPR Training	13	33.3%
Scrap Metal Dealers, Charitable Collections and Sex Establishment Licensing	11	28.2%
Introduction to Environmental Health	10	25.6%
Introduction to Revenues & Benefits	10	25.6%
Fraud Awareness	8	20.5%
Introduction to Housing	14	35.8%
Treasury Management	16	41%
Safeguarding	10	25.6%

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training	8	20.5%
Introduction to Direct Services	10	25.6%
Role of Internal and External Audit	8	20.5%
Introduction to the IT & Digital Strategy	7	17.9%
How Local Government Finance Works	10	25.6%
Introduction to Scrutiny* (Maximum 20 delegates)	15	75%
Chairing Skills Training* (Maximum 20 delegates)	19	95%
Environmental Enforcement Training	11	28.2%
Introduction to Climate Change	9	23%
Equalities/Cohesion Training	8	20.5%
Parking Enforcement Awareness Training	10	25.6%
First Aid and Defibrillator Training* (Maximum 12 delegates)	7	58.3%

- 2.3 The overall percentage of attendance for the Member Induction Programme was 29.2%. Appendix One provides further details of the Members that attended each session.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the training listed above does not include any one-to-one sessions that may have been provided to Members outside of the Member Induction Programme.
- 2.5 Following the Member Induction Programme, additional training sessions have been arranged for Members, as listed below: -

Name of session	Date	Number of attendees	Percentage
Historical Talk by Christoph Bull	Tuesday 03 October 2023, 7:00pm	2	5.1%
Asset, Repairs and Energy Efficiency Training	Thursday 19 October 2023, 7:30pm	6	15.4%
Allocations, Homelessness and Private Sector Training	Monday 30 October 2023, 7:30pm	7	17.9%

Prevent Training	Monday 27 November 2023, 7:30pm	10	25.6%
Risk Management Training	Wednesday 06 December 2023, 7:30pm	13	33.3%
Tenancy Management, Leasehold Management, and Independent Living	Thursday 18 January 2024, 7:30pm	14	35.8%

2.6 Members will also receive a training session on the 'Overview of the Elections Act changes in 2024'. This session is scheduled for Thursday 22 February 2024, 7:30pm. This session has not been included in the draft training plan due to the plan commencing from April 2024.

3. Feedback from Members

3.1 Appendix Two provides a summary of the feedback received from each individual session undertaken as part of the Member Induction Programme. Overall, it is felt that feedback received from Members is positive.

3.2 Appendix Three provides a summary of a questionnaire that was sent to Members to glean further thoughts on the Member Induction Programme overall. The responses are, again, positive, with the majority of Members being satisfied with the programme. Members were satisfied with the timing of the sessions (7:30pm) and the duration (90-120 minutes). All Members who answered the questionnaire had a preference for sessions to be both in person and virtual where appropriate.

4. Draft Member Training 2024 – 25

4.1 Appendix Four presents the draft Member Training Plan for 2024/25. The plan has been created based on the approach taken previously (excluding the Members Induction Programme).

4.2 The aim of the plan is to ensure that Members continue to be well informed of Council information, corporate policies, and priorities together with any key legislative changes. Senior Officers across all services were consulted to ensure that the plan aims to address any Member training requirements identified within their service areas.

4.3 It is proposed that training will mainly be delivered in-house by Senior Officers commencing at 7.30pm. This approach is in line with previous plans and has been the preferred choice of Members.

4.4 It had previously been agreed by Members that for each training session to go ahead there would need to be a minimum number of ten attendees. If confirmation of attendance had not been received by ten attendees, two days ahead of the training, the training will be cancelled. This requirement was relaxed during the Member Induction Programme; however, it is proposed to reinstate it for 2024/25.

4.5 It is acknowledged that it may be difficult for all Members to attend every training session, however, to maximise attendance sessions are arranged on evenings where there are no Committee meetings. During the Member Induction

Programme, it was evident that there was a slight increase in attendance when the sessions were held virtually. Therefore, it is proposed that a majority of sessions will be held virtually. Where it is felt that an in-person session would be more appropriate this request will be accommodated.

- 4.6 Every Member will be encouraged to attend all sessions on offer. The plan and calendar invite will specify when a particular session is highly recommended for specific Members/Committees.
- 4.7 Following each session, Members will be provided with an online training evaluation form. All responses will be reviewed, and suggestions incorporated in future, where possible.
- 4.8 The training plan will be supported by an online 'Training Library' whereby all training presentations and information will be held and accessible to Members after the training has taken place. The 'Training Library' is currently available to all Members via Microsoft Teams. If all attendees of a training session are supportive of a virtual training session being recorded, then this recording can also be uploaded within the library for future reference.
- 4.9 Members are asked to consider, provide feedback on and endorse the Training Plan 2024/25, whilst allowing for additional training sessions will be added as and when required. Upon Cabinet approval of the plan, the Committee Services Team will identify suitable dates for the training sessions and advise Members of these dates in advance.

5. E-learning

- 5.1 As part of the Member Induction Programme, via the Welcome Booklet, Members were provided with details on the Local Government Association's (LGA) E-learning and Distance Learning Workbooks. In addition to the training provided directly by the Council, Members will also be encouraged to regularly review the LGA's online training and development tools.
- 5.2 The Committee Services Team will also present Members with any further online training and development tools offered by other organisations.

6. Consideration of the draft training plan 2024/25 by Overview Scrutiny Committee:

- 6.1 Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee considered the draft training plan for 2024/25 at its meeting on Thursday 04 January 2023; the plan was endorsed, and it was agreed it would be passed to Cabinet for approval. Members of the Committee suggested the following additions to the training plan for 2024/25, which will be incorporated if Cabinet is in agreement: -

- Training and/or briefing session(s) be included on the development of the Local Plan.

If Cabinet agrees, the Committee Services Team will liaise with the Planning Department to incorporate a session(s) into the draft training plan at a suitable time.

- Training to be included on Council Procedural Rules/how Full Council operates (e.g. the different roles at Full Council meetings, rules of debate, point of order etc.) particularly to assist newly elected Members.

If Cabinet agrees, the Committee Services Team will liaise with the Head of Legal Services to incorporate a training session into the draft training plan on Council Procedural Rules.

- Training to be included on etiquette in relation to interacting with/responding to residents and/or officers via email etc.

If Cabinet agrees, the Communications Team can incorporate this within the Communications and Social Media Refresher training that has already been scheduled within the draft training plan.

6.2 The following sessions were also suggested; although, it is felt that these may be best held as part of the next member induction process. However, in the interim, the Committee Services Team will circulate any helpful guidance/information to Members:

- Training to be included on where Gravesham sit/its relationship with other organisations such as Kent County Council, Parishes etc and how to report matters to them.

If Cabinet agrees, the Committee Services Team will look to incorporate training on this within the next Member Induction Programme and will expand on these areas within the Welcome Booklet.

- To assist newly elected Members, it would be useful for those Members to receive training on general areas such as guidance/templates for composing/responding to emails etc.

If Cabinet agrees, the Committee Services Team will look to incorporate a training session on this within the next Member Induction Programme and will expand on these areas within the Welcome Booklet.

6.3 In addition to the above, Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee made the following suggestions for consideration: -

- Overview Scrutiny Committee fully endorse the online Training Library and is supportive of virtual training sessions being recorded and uploaded to the library for future reference.
- It is important that negative feedback following an internal and/or external training session is reported to the lead officer so that consideration can be given to that feedback when arranging future sessions.
- Consideration be given to investing in case management software such as eCasework to allow Councillors to manage/track constituent enquiries etc in one central system.
- Members be encouraged to attend the courses/events offered by the Local Government Association.
- Where practicable, PowerPoint presentations/handouts be provided in advance of training sessions to aid knowledge.
- It was noted that, prior to the recent Finance and Audit Committee, Members were provided with an information video to help further their understanding of the items included on the agenda. The video consisted of an officer presenting slides and expanding on particular areas. This approach should be considered for future

meetings and/or training sessions where particular topics would benefit from further explanation.

7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with the report:

Appendix One: Member Induction Training Record 2023

Appendix Two: Feedback in respect of each individual training session held during the Member Induction Programme

Appendix Three: Member Induction Questionnaire/Feedback

Appendix Four: Draft Member Training Plan 2024/25

8. Background Documents

8.1 There are no background documents.

Lead Officer: Chloe Taylor, Committee Services Officer

Email: chloe.taylor@gravesham.gov.uk

Secondary Implications	
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.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<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>
	a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data ? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. No
	b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A
	c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk . N/A
Equality Impact Assessment	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
	b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No
	<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>
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.