

Overview Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 4 January 2024

7.30pm

Present:

Cllr Jordan Meade (Chair)
Cllr Karina O'Malley (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam
Deborah Croxton
Emma Elliott
Daniel Adewale King
Gavin Larkins
Tony Rana
Frank Wardle

Note: Cllr Alison Williams was also in attendance.

Carlie Simmonds Committee Services Manager
Chloe Taylor Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

22. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Leslie Hills and Cllr Frank Wardle attended as his substitute.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 12 October 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

24. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

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

The Committee Services Officer presented members of the committee with the feedback received on the member induction programme for 2023 together with the draft training plan for 2024/25 and highlighted the following key points:

- A total of 28 sessions were held, with details of the attendance outlined at section 2.2 and in appendix one of the report – the overall percentage of attendance was 29.2%.
- Appendix two of the report detailed the feedback received after each individual session, and it was felt that this was overall positive.
- Appendix three of the report outlined the feedback received from the questionnaire that was sent to members regarding the induction programme overall. Again, it was

felt that this was positive. Where members had suggested additional sessions or amendments, these had been implemented into the plan for 2024/25 where practicable.

- The draft training plan was based on the approach that had been taken previously.
- It was proposed that the minimum 10-member requirement before proceeding with a session be reinstated.
- The training library will be kept up to date with training presentations and potentially with recorded sessions should all attendees be supportive of the session being recorded.
- Members will continue to have access to e-learning material which was provided in the welcome booklet and will be presented with any further online training and development tools.

Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the draft training plan for 2024/25 and highlighted the following areas for consideration by the Cabinet: -

- Training and/or briefing session(s) be included on the development of the Local Plan.
- 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.
- Training to be included on etiquette in relation to interacting with/responding to residents and/or officers via email etc.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Committee fully endorsed the online Training Library and was supportive of virtual training sessions being recorded and uploaded to the library for future reference.
- It was important that negative feedback following an internal and/or external training session was 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.

The committee thanked officers for the good standard of training received during the member induction programme.

The committee agreed for the draft training plan for 2024/25 to be presented to Cabinet for approval together with the above suggestions.

26. Any Other Business

The Chair informed members that he would be having a meeting later that week regarding the Topic Reviews.

Members of the committee were encouraged to attend meetings of the Cabinet and to notify the Chair of any items that they wish to be called in.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm