



REPORT OF:	Head of Corporate Development
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TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	17 th March 2010

WARD (S) AFFECTED:	All
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SUBJECT:	NEW MEMBER INDUCTION AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2009/10 AND 2010/11
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RECOMMENDATION:

To note the new arrangements for new Member induction and Member development for 2010/11 as set out in paragraph 24 of the report.

SUMMARY:

The current arrangements for new Member induction and Member development have been reviewed in the light of new obligations on the Council to promote understanding of how to become a councillor, what councillors do and what support is available to Councillors.

Details of Member induction and development activity for 2009/10 are also reported.

STATUTORY POWERS

1. The Council will be required through the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to promote the functions and democratic arrangements of the Authority and how members of the public can take part.
2. There is a particular duty within the Act to promote understanding of how to become a councillor, what councillors do and what support is available to Councillors.
3. Whilst Regulations under the Act on the "duty to promote" appear to have been put on hold by the Government, Democratic Services have, nevertheless, reviewed the current approach on this matter with a view to improvements being introduced.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2009/2010 AND REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS

4. Annex 1 to this report provides details of (and rationale for) the Member induction and development activities during 2009/10.
5. The review referred to in paragraph 3 above has focussed on:

- Providing information on how to become a councillor and what this entails
- The new Member induction programme
- Member development generally

“DUTY TO PROMOTE AND BECOMING A COUNCILLOR”

6. Currently the Council’s web site includes some information on how to become a Councillor but does not explain what this might entail.
7. Anecdotal evidence suggests some new Members (but certainly not all) may only have a basic understanding of how local government (and this Council) operates and what is likely to be required of them as a Councillor.
8. This situation can impact upon a Councillor’s early days on the Council and the success and understanding of the new Member induction programme. To lessen this potential impact consideration has been given to introduction of measures that would help and better inform prospective candidates as follows:
 - Improved web page on *“Becoming a Councillor”*
 - New web page on *“Being a Councillor”*
 - Guide on *“Being a Councillor”*
 - Prospective candidate *“open”* event at the Town Hall
9. The first three measures essentially build upon current practice and are relatively easy to achieve at little cost. They will go some way to meeting the Council’s future duty under the 2009 Act.
10. The fourth measure is a new concept. A definitive proposal is still being developed but in outline it is hoped to provide an open day event (in November to coincide with Local Democracy Week) at the Town Hall where prospective candidates could receive a presentation covering:
 - An introduction to Local Government
 - Duties of Councillors, including community engagement and leadership
 - Reigate and Banstead – Setting the Scene and how it operates
 - The election process
 - An open discussion on the major incentives, rewards, barriers and concerns regarding becoming a Councillor
11. To supplement the above, the intention would be to provide display material relevant to the event where existing Members and officers would be on hand to

meet prospective candidates and answer any questions they may have. A tour of Town Hall Member/Civic facilities would be given.

12. There would clearly be costs associated with such an event but for 2010/11 these could be met from existing budgets. (see paragraph 29)
13. It is hoped that the above approach will provide a platform and logical linkages to the new Member induction for prospective candidates who are elected. It would go some way to ensuring that newly elected Councillors are better placed to “hit the ground running” in their early days on the Council and realise in a more meaningful way the benefits of the new Member induction programme.

NEW MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME

14. The Council’s new Member induction programme has traditionally consisted of:
 - Provision of a new Member Handbook
 - Mentoring service by Democratic Services
 - A range of induction events covering :
 - Ethics and Probity
 - Regulatory Services (introduction)
 - How the Council Works
 - The Council’s Priorities
 - Know Your Services
 - Finance and the Budget
15. The first two elements have operated relatively well and are being retained, with the handbook being provided in electronic form rather than hard copy. In this connection, all Members already have access to a dedicated Council intranet site providing a comprehensive range of information and details of forthcoming events etc.
16. It is considered that the induction events have been less successful. In this respect it needs to be borne in mind that for new Members the start of the Municipal Year is undoubtedly a demanding time, particularly over the first six weeks on the Council, in terms of the number of meetings that they are asked to attend and intake of information.
17. In addition, there is a degree of duplication between (a) the mentoring arrangement and the How the Council Works session and (b) the Regulatory Services session and training provided as part of the main Member development programme on the regulatory, licensing and planning functions - see paragraph 21.

18. The various induction events (apart from the Ethics and Probity training which needs to remain separate) will be consolidated and simplified into one evening event. The outline programme is as follows:
 - Welcome, introduction and presentation on Corporate objectives and services
 - Presentation by each Director (or representative) providing a brief overview of services, current issues/challenges etc
 - “Freshers Fair” along the lines provided for new employees
19. The above format would be similar and build upon the prospective candidate event and be more specific to Reigate and Banstead. The “freshers fair” would enable new Members to meet officers in a more informal setting to ask questions and to learn more about Council services of specific interest to them.
20. Overall, the arrangements will be more cost effective and efficient than at present.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

21. As a minimum this will consist of training on the regulatory services (planning, licensing and regulatory functions) and dates have already been scheduled in prior to the first meetings of the related committees. Individual Members will continue to have opportunities to attend one-off external seminars/conferences where these help meet corporate objectives and enhance skills and knowledge.
22. In terms of a more detailed programme for the remainder of the year, discussions have yet to be concluded with the Executive Member for Personnel and Business Transformation. It is also intended to seek the views of Group Leader’s on Member requirements. This will therefore be a matter for further report to the Committee once requirements are known and a programme has been devised.
23. For 2009/10 the Council drew upon the Surrey Improvement Partnership (SIP) Member Development Programme. This programme is Government funded and provides competency based training on wider skills available to all Surrey Members through a series of training sessions across the County. The programme will continue through 2010/11 and details are currently awaited.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS 2010/11

24. In summary proposals are as follows:

Pre-Borough Elections

- Improved web page on “*Becoming a Councillor*”
- New web page on “*Being a Councillor*”

- Guide on “*Being a Councillor*”
- Prospective candidate “open” event at the Town Hall (see paragraph 10)

New Member Induction

- Electronic provision of a new Members Handbook
- Mentoring service by Democratic Services
- Access to dedicated Members intranet
- Induction event incorporating a “freshers fair” (see paragraph 18)
- Probity and ethics (Code of Conduct) training – open to all Members

Member Development

- Training on the regulatory services
- Individual attendance by Members at external seminars/conferences
- Participation in SIP Member Development Programme
- Remainder of programme tba

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

25. The Corporate Plan theme “Council fit for the future” includes an objective to achieve continuous improvement by undertaking Member training to enable them to fulfil their roles.

CONSULTATION

26. The Executive Member for Personnel and Business Transformation has been consulted on proposals in this report and these discussions are on-going.
27. Group Leaders are also being consulted on Member development requirements for 2010/2011 prior to a programme being developed.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

28. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The Member development budget for 2009/10 was £4,000 and will be unchanged for 2010/2011.
30. The new proposals set out in this report are, in the main, replacing existing arrangements. The prospective candidate event will involve additional expenditure but this can be met from the 2010/11 budget. In relation to new Member induction, the proposals are likely to be more cost efficient and effective in terms of officer time and involvement.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

31. The introduction of these proposals will provide equal access to Member development opportunities for all Members.

Background Papers: None

Annex 1

Annex 1

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2009-10

The current approach to Member training is to focus on the knowledge based training required to ensure that Members have the necessary knowledge to undertake their role (principally in relation to the regulatory functions and ethics and probity). We respond to individual member requests for external course attendance as appropriate (following consultation with the portfolio holder)

Competency based training on wider skills are currently being made available to Members via the Surrey Improvement Partnership Member Development Programme which is operating a series of training sessions across the County . The following report provides details of Member Training and briefings provided during 2009/10 to date.

2009/10

Planning Committee Training

09/06/09 - 24 Members in attendance

21/07/09 - 10 Members in attendance

Licensing Committee Training

18/06/09 - approximately 15 Members

Planning Briefings

August 09 - Core Strategy Briefing (with Res Associations)

21/09/09 - Improving Housing Design Quality - 11 Members in attendance

07/10/09 - Planning Appeals - 8 Members in attendance

November 09 - Core Strategy Examination (with Res Associations)

Housing Briefing (Raven Housing Trust)

Anti-Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management - 14 Members in attendance

Waste Collection Briefing

October 09 - Rounds Restructuring - no record of attendance

Corporate Plan

ASD Project - no record of attendance

Surrey Improvement Partnership - Member Development Initiative

Variety of events held throughout Surrey. Evaluation awaited.

New Member Induction - 1 Member following Earlswood and Whitebushes By-Election