

# Ashford Borough Council

## Report of the Chairman of the Member Training Panel – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 A virtual meeting of the Member Training Panel was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

The Members present were:-

Councillor Pickering (Chairman);  
Councillor Mrs Bell (Vice-Chairman);  
Councillors Blanford, Forest, Harman, Howard.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Councillor Harman attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Pauley.

#### **Apologies: -**

Councillors Pauley, Spain.

#### **Also Present:-**

Member Services Manager, Senior Member Services Officer.

### 2 Minutes

- 2.1 **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Panel held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 be received and noted.**

### 3 Member Training Panel Annual Report 2021/22

- 3.1 The Senior Member Services Officer ran through the Annual Report, which was a requirement of the Panel to produce and present to Cabinet every year. It was a factual report which detailed all the training that had been undertaken during 2020/21 and 2021/22. It was acknowledged that the training programme had been derailed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, however there were a number of training sessions held during this time, with virtual briefings ensuring that Councillors were updated on important matters. This was also an opportune time to look forward to the coming year and assess what training needs there were. Attention was also drawn to the recent 'Member Development Audit' during which a 'Sound' level of assurance had been given and the four minor recommendations that had been made following this.
- 3.2 The Chairman opened the report up to the Panel and the following points were made: -

- The level of training that had been carried out during this exceptional time was not only welcomed but remarkable.
- The recommendations from the Member Development Audit were discussed at length. On reflection, the Panel felt that it was the role of the Officers supporting Member Training to pro-actively identify any training needs and opportunities and it would not be the most efficient use of Officer time to request Senior Officers to attend the Panel to discuss potential training. In respect of the publication of attendance at training sessions, the Panel felt that the attendance of Councillors on Committees where training was mandatory, such as Planning and Licensing, should be published and available to view on the Council's website.
- The Panel considered that cyber security training was of utmost importance and consideration was given as to whether such training should be made mandatory. It was agreed that all Councillors be reminded of their requirement to undertake such training and detailed instructions on how to access this training would be provided.

### **3.3 Resolved:**

**That**

- (i) The Annual Report be received and noted, and presented to the Cabinet.**
- (ii) All Councillors be reminded to undertake the necessary Cyber Security training**

## **4 Planning for the 2023 Induction Process**

- 4.1 The Member Services Manager advised the Panel that the process of preparing for the 2023 Induction was underway. The Panel would meet several times over the next year to influence and formalise the Induction Process. The previous Induction had been well received and the reintroduction of the Market Stalls event had been highly commended and it was intended to hold this again.
- 4.2 The Chairman opened the item up to the Panel and the following comments were made:
- The previous Induction, along with the Market Stalls event, had been successful and the Panel welcomed a similar approach for 2023.
  - Guidance on Protocols would be beneficial to new Councillors, as would a session on the Constitution. The Member Services Manager advised that they would build this into the plan for the Induction Process.
- 4.3 The Senior Member Services Officer further advised that they would look to survey all Councillors regarding their experiences of the Induction Process and ascertain what they felt was beneficial and what, if anything, was lacking.

#### **4.4 Resolved:**

**That the Panel would meet again in the Summer to discuss the progress made on the Induction Process.**

Councillor A Pickering  
Chairman – Member Training Panel

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