

# Scrutiny Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

Author: Sally Truman

Telephone: 01491 823046

Textphone: 18001 01491 823046

E-mail: sally.truman@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: Matthew Barber

Tel: 01235 540391

E-mail: Matthew.Barber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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## Councillor Development Programme 2015

### Recommendation

- (a) To review the councillor induction and development programme content, methodology and timeframes.

### Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the draft councillor development programme to be delivered following the elections in May 2015. Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the draft proposals.

### Strategic Objectives

2. A development programme is fundamental to helping councillors to be effective in their various roles; it therefore underpins all of the council's strategic objectives. The programme will be delivered following the elections in May 2015 and on-going support will be available for councillors subsequently elected in by-elections.

## Background

3. There is currently no co-ordinated induction for newly elected councillors or systematic training programme for new and existing councillors. Not all councillors have a clear understanding of their various roles, the required skills and abilities and the expectations on them. Consequently councillors can lack confidence and feel frustrated by their inability to play a meaningful role in the business of the council. To help address this situation it will be beneficial to provide councillors with improved access to training and development opportunities.
4. A project board was initiated to manage the programme development, including running pilot sessions, across both councils and a joint programme has now been drafted. Appendix one shows how the various skills/knowledge requirements identified by councillors will be covered as part of the programme. Appendix two shows outline timescales for delivery of the various workshop sessions; however most actual dates are yet to be agreed. It is anticipated that the LGA sessions will run three times at each council (subject to the full growth bid being approved). Internal sessions will run a minimum of once at each council, and where possible these sessions will be open to councillors from both councils to maximise opportunities to attend.
5. Officers have consulted councillors at various stages in the project, and there are Councillor Champions from all groups at both councils to ensure they form an integral part of the programme. These champions have been involved in reviewing all aspects of the programme including the new Councillor Roles and Responsibilities document, the pilot workshops, the content of the programme and the welcome pack.
6. Two workshops entitled 'Understanding your needs' were held with councillors from both councils scrutiny committees. The workshops helped to define their roles and responsibilities as district councillors in relation to:
  - working in wards
  - casework referrals
  - managing and participating in meetings (scrutiny/committee meetings etc.)
  - working with council officers and protocols.

The workshops were helpful in identifying the skills required to fulfil a councillors roles, and provided an insight into how best to structure the programme.

7. At the request of the Vale Scrutiny Committee officers have piloted some elements of the draft programme. This included the sessions which, it is suggested, will be delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA) on 'Effective influencing, mediation and facilitation' and 'Effective meetings' accompanied by the LGA workbook – chairing skills.
8. Attached is a draft programme, which Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on. It sets out what activities are currently proposed, the timescales for delivery and the intended audience. In summary the programme includes:

- a welcome pack, which will contain essential 'day one' information and forms, which councillors need to complete as soon as possible after their election
- 'Getting to Know You' forums at each council
- a series of three workshops delivered by the LGA
- provision of workbooks and e-learning on a number of other topics that are of interest to councillors
- a series of workshops on quasi- judicial functions e.g. licensing and planning
- sessions on IT/data and other general statutory requirements that councillors need to be aware of
- training specifically tailored to councillors who will sit on various scrutiny and regulatory committees.

## **Financial Implications**

9. The costs of delivering the proposed programme, including external trainers, printing, venue hire and refreshments for the 'Getting to Know You' forum are estimated at £18,500 per council. A growth bid has been submitted as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process.

## **Legal Implications**

10. The proposed development programme is focussed to ensure that councillors are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to carry out their respective roles in line with the Councillor Code of Conduct and to make decisions in line with relevant legislation, and according to the principles of good decision making.

## **Risks**

11. Potential risks to achieving the objectives of this project are:
- lack of buy in/ engagement from councillors
  - the growth bid is not successful so the programme is either scaled back to such an extent that the objectives are not met or in the worst case, the programme is not delivered.

## **Conclusion**

12. The programme attached has been developed in collaboration with councillors from both councils. Elements were piloted and subsequently revised in light of the feedback from those sessions. Officers request that committee review the programme and make any comments prior to development of the final programme for delivery in 2015.

# Appendix One - Proposed Councillor Induction and Development Programme 2015

*Providing skills and knowledge to help you effectively fulfil your roles as councillors*

<b>Timeframe (after May 2015 election)</b>	<b>Activity Skills and Knowledge</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Audience</b>
Four weeks commencing 8 May	Councillor helpline	Telephone helpline for advice	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
8 May  11 May 2015 (Vale)  12 May 2015 (South)	<b>Welcome to the council</b>	<b>Welcome pack</b> Information folder  <b>Getting to Know You Forum</b> Face to face meetings with Service teams IT surgeries IT Fact Card Meet your council officer buddy Presentations	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
8 May  11 May 2015  12 May 2015	<b>Understanding the council roles and responsibilities</b>  <b>Responsibilities of each service</b>	<b>Welcome pack</b> Information folder  <b>Getting to Know You Forum</b> Face to face meetings with Service teams IT surgeries IT Fact Card Meet your council officer buddy Presentations	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
8 May  Week commencing 18 May	<b>Councillor general knowledge – What you can and can't do and what can get you into difficulty</b>  To include: Code of Conduct, constitution, motions, councillor call for action, questions at committee meetings, anti fraud and corruption policies, whistle blowing policy, safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, equality, health and safety and the use of social media and consequences, council meeting protocol	<b>Welcome pack</b> Information folder  <b>Internal Workshops:</b>  Health and Safety  Equality and diversity  Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults  Anti fraud and corruption  Use of social media and consequences Talking to the press  Scrutiny Briefing	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
Week commencing 18/26 May (Week 2/3)  28 May 6:00pm-8:00pm  29 May 6:00pm-8:00pm	<b>Planning committees</b> Role of planning committees in the wider context i.e. how planning is responding to the government agenda	<b>Internal Workshop</b> <i>Planning committee date for information:</i> 3 June — South 10 June – Vale  <b>two hour workshop</b>    <b>two hour workshop</b>	Re elected Cllrs and members of the planning committee and subs

<b>Timeframe (after May 2015 election)</b>	<b>Activity Skills and Knowledge</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Audience</b>
Week 2/3 (Week commencing 18 May)	Licensing committees	Workshop	Re-elected Cllrs and members of the licensing committee and subs
Week 2 onwards (Week commencing 18 May)	Working in wards and handling casework	Mentoring Guidelines - groups to identify mentors for newly elected councillors when required  LGA Workbooks / case studies available online for distance learning where appropriate	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
11 May 2015 12 May 2015  Week 4+ (Week commencing 8 June)	Collaborative working, developing constructive working relationships with each other and council officers	'Getting to Know You' Forum Face to face meetings with Service teams  Presentations.  Mentoring guidelines  Workbooks / case studies available online for distance learning where appropriate from the LGA	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
Weeks 3 -4  Week commencing 1 June	Role of scrutiny - ability to ask questions, probe and challenge  Essential for all councillors on scrutiny committees and their substitutes	Workshop <i>Scrutiny Dates for information only:</i> 23 June – South 25 June – Vale	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the scrutiny committee and subs
Weeks 4-5 (Week commencing 8 June)	The Planning Process – overview of planning applications, enforcement and building control	Internal workshop	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the planning committee and subs
Week 4 onwards (Week commencing 8 June)	Community engagement and the role of a councillor in the community including partnership working with police, health, parish, county etc.	Mentoring guidelines  Workbooks / case studies, available online for distance learning where appropriate from the LGA	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
Weeks 6 -8 (Week commencing 15 June)	Chairing skills – including external meetings  Essential for those taking up the position of chair and their substitutes	Workshop work book top tips for chairing meetings	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the planning, licensing, audit and governance and scrutiny committees and subs  Meeting chairs and subs
Weeks 6-8 (Week commencing 15 June)	Meetings: Preparation and planning Participating Role of chair	Workshop  Workbook – chairing Skills  Resources: top tips for chairing meetings	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the planning, licensing, audit and governance and scrutiny committees and subs  Meeting chairs and subs
Weeks 6-8 (Week commencing 15 June)	Making the most of IT:  Data Protection Act  Freedom of Information	Internal Workshop  Data protection  Freedom of information  Resources IT key facts card	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs

<b>Timeframe (after May 2015 election)</b>	<b>Activity Skills and Knowledge</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Audience</b>
20/30 June Date TBC One session	<b>Role of audit and governance committee</b>	<b>Internal Workshop - internal/external audit functions</b> <i>Committee dates for information: 6 July – South 7 July – Vale</i>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs
July 2015	<b>Planning enforcement</b>	<b>Internal work shop</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
July 2015	<b>Planning Policy</b>	<b>Internal work shop</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
July 2015	<b>Planning Misc:</b> Cil/Sec106 Local plan timetable Building control Ecology/landscape Conservation and design	<b>Internal work shop</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
5-6 months September	<b>Personal Impact</b> - getting your message across effectively:  Influencing, listening and communication skills, leadership, and mediation, handling awkward situations and residents Incorporating meetings and ward scenarios to help get the key messages across	<b>Workshop</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
6 months+  September/October	<b>Finance</b>  Budget setting, budget management, treasury management, benefits, council tax, internal audit, external audit How money is spent across the region, comparisons with other councils	<b>Presentation</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs
Week commencing 21 September two sessions	<b>Role of audit and governance committee</b>	<b>Internal Workshop - Statement of accounts</b> <i>Committee dates for information: 29 September – South 29 September – Vale</i>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs
Week commencing 17 August (S only) Week commencing 19 October (V only)	<b>Awarding grants</b> - your role in the decision making including community involvement and area committees	<b>Internal workshop</b> <i>For information: CGS dates: 8/15 September – South Area Committee dates: 2/3/9/10 November - Vale</i>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs
25 Jan 2016 – South 26 Jan 2016 - Vale two sessions	<b>Role of audit and governance committee</b>	<b>Internal Workshop - Treasury Management</b> <i>Committee dates for information: 25 Jan 2016 – South 26 Jan 2016 – Vale</i>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs
Week commencing 14 March 2016 one session	<b>Risk management and business continuity</b>	<b>Internal Workshop</b> <i>Committee dates for information: 24 March 2016 – South 22 March 2016 – Vale</i>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs
Week commencing 14 March 2016 one session	<b>Money laundering</b>	<b>Internal workshop</b>	Newly elected and re-elected Cllrs and members of the audit and governance committee and subs

# Appendix Two – Outline workshop timetable

Date	Topic	Internal/external provider
11 May	Getting to Know You Forum (Vale)	Internal
12 May	Getting to Know You Forum (South)	Internal
w/c 18 May	What Can Get you Into Trouble, inc. various statutory responsibilities, social media etc	Internal
28 May	Planning Committee (South)	Internal
29 May	Planning Committee (Vale)	Internal
w/c 1 June	Role of Scrutiny Committee	External/LGA
w/c 8 June	Planning process	Internal
w/c 15 June	Meeting skills inc. basic chairing and external meetings	External/LGA
w/c 15 June	Making the most of IT, inc. Freedom of Information and Data Protection	Internal
w/c 18 June	Licensing Committees	Internal
June - date tbc	Role of Audit & Corporate Governance Committee	Internal
July - date tbc	Planning – enforcement, policy, local plan etc	Internal
August – date tbc	Grant awarding	Internal
September – dates tbc	Personal impact	External/LGA
September/October – date tbc	Finance	Internal
September – date tbc	Audit and Corporate Governance/ statement of accounts	Internal
October – dates tbc	Grant awarding	Internal
25 January	Audit and Corporate Governance/Treasury Management (South)	Internal
26 January	Audit and Corporate Governance/Treasury Management (Vale)	Internal
w/c 14 March	Audit and Corporate Governance/Risk Management and business continuity	Internal
w/c 14 March	Audit and Corporate Governance/Money laundering	Internal