

Member Development 2020-2021 What have we done?

Continue to build on established activity & deliver tailored training opportunities

Member development aims to provide councillors with a range of learning opportunities; From a firm foundation of key skills to more specialist training depending on interests, the needs of residents and any additional responsibilities.

GDPR has been a particular focus as members have adapted to less reliance on paper records. Learning opportunities and support have included; cyber security training, top tips and information guides.

Equality and Diversity is another focus and the creation of the Member Equalities Working Group shows how important it is for everyone to feel included in everything we do.

Use a diverse and flexible range of delivery methods



Remote meetings and lock down measures have meant council business has to be conducted differently. Councillors and Officers have had to adapt quickly and embraced the new challenge being presented. Although many people have missed the face to face contact, there have been some benefits to the new ways of working. These have included:

Training sessions have been recorded so councillors can catch up at a convenient time

Teams meetings mean that Councillors can log in from home, cutting down on travelling time

Teams has also been a useful way of Councillors contacting officers

Capitalise on opportunities to work with others

Partnership working opportunities have been more challenging this year as many of our partners were busy responding to residents needs and co-ordinating volunteers in response to the pandemic. We had a number of training opportunities provided by the LGA are available and have included a selection of E-learning modules from LGA and webinars. Webinar topics included:

- Digital inclusion and connectivity
- Taxi Licencing
- Social care and shielding vulnerable people

Remote meetings

Councillors have been supported to develop new skills with support offered including:

Provision of headsets



Individual training sessions

Practise sessions with Chairs and committee members

Hints and tips in Democracy Snapshot



Agenda guides



Members were quickly up and running with the first online planning meeting on 23 April 20 just one month after lockdown started.

“Member development has had to adapt, the swift implementation of remote meetings was an opportunity for learning. The delivery of events over webinar with recordings available has made sessions more accessible to more people especially when provided without additional cost” - Cllr Nick Allen

Democracy goes digital

Democratic engagement has been more important than ever as residents have looked to Community Leaders in times of uncertainty. Councillors have engaged with residents this year by:

- Leaders Blog published regularly on the website
- Local outbreak engagement forum
- Access to public meetings through the BFC You Tube Channel

Mayoralty

The Mayor of Bracknell Forest Councillor Ash Merry, has connected with residents. Mayoral events in recent years have involved hand shaking, photo opportunities and sharing mince pies have been replaced with zoom calls, filming short videos, virtual meetings and socially distanced ribbon cutting. Despite many events being postponed or cancelled, the Mayor has attended events including a winter wonderland at Coppid Beach hotel and met 'Covid Ambassadors' at the Lexicon.



980 Twitter followers

Over 50 Tweets to residents

23 engagements

Online remembrance service

Online citizenship ceremonies

Adapting to Covid-19 ways of working: one year on

- Twice weekly briefings with Chief Executive
- Total 77 meetings
- Average attendance of over 30 members

Support provided:

- Additional IT equipment including Headsets, development of an online meeting etiquette and practise remote meetings with committees.

Democracy Snapshot



52 Issues

Topics included:

- IT Tips,
- Latest pandemic information
- Updates from partner organisations including Thames Valley Police, Involve and the Public Protection partnership.
- Important dates,
- Overview and Scrutiny Review updates
- Training opportunities
- Meetings list
- Ward alerts.

101 weekly recipients with average readership of 75%.

Member Development in numbers:

10 Approved Conferences

21 Additional Conferences

3 Councillor development sessions

5 Training or information sessions

Councillors attended a total of 143 sessions an average of 3 each.

£285 per councillor spent on training and approved and additional conferences (not including Officer time)

Councillor Blogs:

Councillors blogs were launched in December 2020 and so far we have published submissions from The Mayor, Councillor Ash Merry to wish staff Members a Merry Christmas. Councillor Pauline McKenzie on 'How volunteering enriched my life' which gave a wonderful insight into the hard work being undertaken at Sandhurst day centre and Councillor Ian Kirke's discussion with a mother whose Son has Downs Syndrome and his success playing rugby. If you would like to submit a blog, please contact Emma Young.

BLOG

What's next? The SEE Charter accreditation process for Member Development will start in 2021 which will involve providing evidence and interviewing members about their development opportunities. Watch for further information in Democracy Snapshot soon

Look out for! New ways of delivering training and information sessions including briefing videos from Officers and updates to our intranet pages.