

TITLE	Overview and Scrutiny Member Training
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 23 March 2021
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Overview and Scrutiny plays a key role in holding the Executive and other public service providers to account. Training and support for Members is essential in order to provide them with the knowledge and skills required in order to carry out their roles effectively

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) consider the provision of Overview and Scrutiny training for Members in 2021/22;
- 2) consider the indicative training and development programme provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny;
- 3) consider and approve any amendments to the suggested programme;
- 4) agree that the induction/refresher training session be held on Tuesday 15 June 2021.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

One of the Committee's roles is to ensure appropriate training and support for Members to enable them to carry out their Overview and Scrutiny roles.

Induction/refresher training is usually provided following the May elections. In recent years, other elements of training, such as health and social care and budget, have been provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Members have commented positively on the format and content of the training.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has been approached to provide an indicative training programme for 2021/22 (Annex). Members are asked to consider the programme and make amendments as necessary.

Training and Development are important in order to refresh Members skills and to consider recent developments in legislation and best practice. This is especially true this year following the many changes arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Background

One of the Committee's roles is to ensure appropriate training and support for Members to enable them to carry out their Overview and Scrutiny roles.

Induction/refresher training is usually provided following the May elections. In recent years, other elements of training, such as health and social care and budget, have been provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Members have commented positively on the format and content of the training.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has been approached to provide an indicative training programme for 2021/22 (Annex). The suggested programme focuses on four topics:

- Scrutiny Essentials: The strategic Role of Scrutiny – developing a clear overview and understanding of the strategic role of Overview and Scrutiny in helping to shape Council policies and plans, acting as the “critical friend”. If approved by the Committee, it is suggested that this training session be delivered virtually on Tuesday 15 June 2021.
- Chairing and Leading Scrutiny – understanding the role of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in making Committees effective through clear leadership and inclusive chairing.
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny – understanding the role in helping to make services more effective through using data, developing key lines of enquiry and recognizing the overlap between areas of health scrutiny and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Children's Services and Safeguarding – understanding the diverse landscape of children's services, identifying sources of data and effective questioning techniques relating to key partner agencies.

The suggested programme is indicative. Members may wish to identify other priority areas. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has confirmed that it will tailor the programme to meet local needs.

Training and Development are important in order to refresh Members' skills and to consider recent developments in legislation and best practice. This is especially true this year following the many changes arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The projected costs of the training sessions are:

- Per session delivered at Shute End: 2.5 hours: £1,050 + VAT + Travel;
- Per session delivered online: 1.5 hours: £650 + VAT.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. It is, therefore, imperative that Council resources are focussed on the vulnerable and its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£4,600 on site £3,200 online	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	NA	NA

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The cost of the training sessions would be met from the Member Training budget.

Cross-Council Implications

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to drive service improvement, policy development and the achievement of value for money for the Borough's residents.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The issues scrutinised during 2021/22 will raise the profile of Overview and Scrutiny for residents across the Borough, including residents with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The aim is to achieve better outcomes and increased value for money for residents.

Climate Emergency – The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham borough by 2030

Scrutiny training will assist Members who are involved in scrutinising the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan

List of Background Papers

Training proposal from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

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