



Report to Governance Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Jason Dietsch,
Head of Democratic Services

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Report of: *James Henderson, Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement*

Report to: *Governance Committee*

Date of Decision: *20 July 2023*

Subject: ***Member Development***

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2241 (Initial EIA)				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report asks the Governance Committee to consider the Council's approach to Member Development and to provide comments on the existing Member Development Strategy 2021-25, including any changes of emphasis or priority in the light of the implementation of the committee system in Sheffield from 2022 and the 6-month review of governance and recent reviews, including the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, the Race Equality Commission and the Street Tree inquiry report.

The Member Development Strategy 2021-25 is appended to this report for information and review. The report describes the training and development activity completed or planned so far in 2023/24.

The Committee is asked to re-establish the Member Development Working Group to take forward the detailed work on member development, and to consider the draft terms of reference for the Group and to request that the Group works on a programme of learning and development for Members, for the forthcoming year and then reports back to Governance Committee.

The Committee is asked to discuss and suggest any priorities for the 2023/24

Member Development Programme and areas which might be categorised as mandatory learning and development for elected members to complete.

The Committee is also asked to support work to produce new role profiles for elected Members and for officers to work with the Member Development Working Group on the profiles which will then be submitted to the Governance Committee for its consideration.

Recommendations:

The Governance Committee is asked to:

1. Provide any comments on the existing Member Development Strategy 2021-25 and particularly any changes of emphasis or priority in the light of the implementation of the committee system and recent pieces of work, including the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, the Race Equality Commission and the Street Tree Inquiry report.
2. Formally re-establish the Member Development Working Group, noting the proposed membership of the Group and to consider the draft terms of reference for the group and to request that the Group works on a programme of learning and development for Members, for the forthcoming year and reports back to Governance Committee.
3. Discuss and suggest any priorities for the 2023/24 Member Development Programme and areas which might be categorised as mandatory learning and development for elected members to complete.
4. Ask the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement to produce new role profiles and to work with the Member Development Working Group on the profiles which will then be submitted to the Governance Committee for its consideration.

Background Papers: 21st Century Councillor [21st-century-councillor.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Appendices: Member Development Strategy 2021-25 and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Matthew Ardern
	Legal: David Hollis
	Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton
	Climate: N/A

	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>James Henderson</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Councillor Fran Belbin</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Jason Dietsch</i>	Job Title: <i>Head of Democratic Services</i>
	Date: <i>10 July 2023</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Member Development Strategy

- 1.1.1 A four-year Member Development Strategy was developed in October 2021 and is appended to this report. It describes the objectives of member development activity, the Council's commitment to providing this service as part of the support we provide to elected Members, the various roles and challenges for councillors during the period covered by the strategy and other considerations likely to be important when producing an annual plan and programme of member development.
- 1.1.2 The strategy also draws on the **21st Century Councillor**, which is work undertaken by the University of Birmingham and North West Employers and which looked at the roles, skills and support needed to enable individual Members to undertake their crucial front-line role of making connections with their communities and building a strong democratic place.
- 1.1.3 Since the Strategy was produced in 2021, there have been several new developments, including the introduction of the committee system of governance in Sheffield in 2022 and a 6 month review of governance arrangements, the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, the Race Equality Commission and the Sheffield Street Tree Inquiry and subsequent report.
- 1.1.4 These provide a timely opportunity for further reflection on whether there are aspects of the existing Member Development strategy and plan that Members would like to emphasise or prioritise in the light of the learning from these changes, reviews and external observations on how the Council works, its effectiveness and culture.
- 1.1.5 As an example, the Street Tree Inquiry complimented by the LGA Peer Review recommended a review of the elected member code of conduct and member-officer protocol and that this should be supported by improvements to elected member development, induction and linked to the Council's recent values work. The Council's Organisational Values are.
- People are at the heart of what we do
 - Openness and honesty are important to us
 - Together we get things done
- 1.1.6 Recommendation 15 of the 6 Month Review of New Governance Arrangements states that "Governance Committee should continue into 2023/24 as a forum for ongoing review and maintenance of the constitution and governance arrangements, as well as Member development." And it is proposed that the Committee maintains oversight for Member Development, the strategy and annual plan and that a

Member Development Working Group is established to undertake the more detailed work, and which helps to guide member development activity, as set out in section 1.2 of this report.

1.1.7 There is also an opportunity to consider how Members might also benefit from aspects of the learning development offer for council employees, which includes a range of different learning opportunities, such as the online courses on the Go Learn platform and Bookboon.

1.1.8 **Questions for the Committee:** Does the Committee have any comments on the existing Member Development Strategy and to identify changes of emphasis or priority in the light of the implementation of the committee system and recent reviews or other innovation or change?

1.2 **Member Development Working Group**

1.2.1 A Member Development Working Group was formed in September 2021. The group is composed of representatives from each of the political groups represented on the Council and the proposed membership for 2023/24 is as follows:

Councillors: Sue Alston, Fran Belbin, Joe Otten, Martin Phipps, Sioned-Mair Richards, Paul Turpin

1.2.2 **Terms of Reference:**

The Governance Committee is asked to consider the following draft terms of reference for the Member Development Working Group.

1.2.3 **Purpose:**

The purpose of this cross-party group is to discuss Member Development needs, offer informal direction to officers who are developing this programme and to help keep Members updated on what is happening with development opportunities and what is being planned. It helps to ensure that elected Members are engaged in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of Member development activities. It will support the objectives of the Member Development Strategy to help us to continuously learn and improve as a council.

1.2.4 The Working Group is not a decision-making body. However, it will make recommendations to the Governance Committee as appropriate. In the absence of a nominated Member, a substitute should attend if possible. The Working Group will be supported by officers from Democratic Services and others, as appropriate.

1.2.5 **Terms of Reference:**

1. Creating future policies and strategies for Member learning and development for consideration by the Governance Committee.

2. Identifying learning and development needs of individuals and groups of Members, including those relevant to Members' roles and responsibilities, general skills and learning which is specific to particular committees, and prioritising them.
3. Prioritising programmes of learning and development so these reflect the Council's objectives.
4. Promoting learning and development opportunities to elected Members, including through political groups.
5. Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of learning and development programmes.
6. Monitoring the implementation of the annual learning and development plan and budget priorities.

1.2.6 **Questions for the Committee:** Do these draft terms of reference provide sufficient scope for the Member Development Working Group, and do they cover the right things? Do you wish to say more about the relationship of the Working Group and the Governance Committee?

1.3 Programme for 2023/24

1.3.1 Over the past municipal year of operating within a committee system and in the run up to the new system, there has been a programme of learning and development for Members. The summary below sets out the most recent and planned activity in the member development programme for 2023/24.

Activity	Target Audience	Date
New Councillor induction	Newly Elected Members	May 2023
Information Management - Refresh Session	Newly Elected Members	15th/16th June TBC
Planning Committee Training	Planning Committee Members	20/06/23
Licensing	Licensing Committee Members	23/06/23
Introduction to the Full Council Meeting	Newly Elected Members	26/06/23
Accounts	Audit & Standards Committee Members	TBC
Standards	Audit & Standards Committee Members	TBC
Communications Team Workings	Chairs, Deputy Chairs & Spokespersons	TBC
Equality Impact Assessment	Policy Committee and LAC (Local Area Committee) Members	12/07/23 and 07/09/23
Charity Trustee Responsibilities	Charity Trustee Sub-Committee	TBC
Corporate Parenting Strategy	All Members	TBC
Councillor's Guide to Understanding your Council's Financial Reporting Requirements	Audit & Standards Committee Members	24/08/23

Introduction to the Knowledge and Skills of the Audit Committee	Audit & Standards Committee Members	17/07/23
Review of Sheffield City Council's Statement of Accounts - bespoke independent training to be arranged	Audit & Standards Committee Members	TBC

1.3.2 We need to improve how we evaluate the success of each learning and development activity by asking Members about their experience of the training and the extent to which it met the learning objectives and their individual needs.

1.3.3 **Questions for the Committee:** The Committee is asked to discuss and suggest any priorities for the 2023/24 Member Development Programme and areas which might be categorised as mandatory learning and development for elected members to complete.

1.4 Member Role Profiles

1.4.1 We are producing new role profiles for the key roles for elected Members in the Committee system. This includes Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and group Spokespersons. It is proposed that officers produce the profiles and work with the Member Development Working Group to ensure that they are a true representation of the roles and responsibilities of Members in those roles and to consider what learning and development opportunities would best support a councillor in the role, either as a new Member or an experienced one. The role profiles will then be submitted to the Governance Committee for its consideration.

1.4.2 This action supports one of the findings of the 6 Month Review of New Governance Arrangements and activity in the Governance Review Implementation Plan, which is to develop clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities for Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespeople and how officers are expected to brief and interact with these roles.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1 Members must have the opportunities to develop the knowledge, tools and skills they need to deliver a challenging agenda in a fast-changing environment. The Member Development Programme aims to provide Members with the tools and ongoing skills they need to mobilise local communities, grow community capacity, support local innovation and to be able to take important decisions and represent their constituents.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 There has not been formal consultation with the exception of the proposed membership of the Working Group. The Committee is asked for its views on the proposals set out in the report. The Member Development Working Group will enable discussion about member development needs, and it will help to ensure that elected Members are engaged in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of Member development activities.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 The 6 month review of new governance arrangements EIA references the importance of the annual programme of Member training and development.
- 4.1.2 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. These are often collectively referred to as the 'general duties to promote equality'. In addition, Council policy is also to consider the wider context, indicators and risks of inequality when assessing the implications of our proposals. We have considered our legal obligations and policy commitments in an initial impact assessment.
- 4.1.3 We will however continue to assess our Member development plan in line with our commitments to Equality diversity and inclusion and our Duties. We are for example ensuring that all Members are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Equality Act and the Council's overall Duties. This training is highlighted in the report, and following feedback from the training undertaken we will further develop more specific training as required.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no specific financial implications from this report. Training sessions are provided by a mix of internal officers and external providers for more specialist topics, funded from existing budgets. In the event that new specific initiatives were proposed, the funding would be approved through the appropriate decision making route. There is a £7k annual budget for member development. Additionally, the LGA has provided one-off funding to support member development activity this year.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 There is no legal requirement to provide training for Members. However, doing so ensures that they have a knowledge and awareness of the Council's and their own statutory obligations and enables the efficient running of Council business.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no specific climate implications arising from this report. A Member development programme provides potential opportunities learning and development activity to improve knowledge and understanding of issues relating to climate. The Member development programme in 2021 and 2022 included Carbon Literacy training specifically for elected members.