Sheffield City Council

Audit and Standards Committee Report

Report of: **Director of Legal and Governance**

Date: **21st October 2021**

Subject: **Member Development Progress Report**

Author of Report: **Rachel Marshall, Principal Committee Secretary**

Summary:

This report describes what Member Development has taken place so far and what the plans are for further and future development.

Recommendations: the Committee are asked to note the progress of Member Development.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

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* Delete as appropriate

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications	
NO - Cleared by: Paul Schofield	
Legal Implications	
NO - Cleared by: Andrea Simpson	
Equality of Opportunity Implications	
NO - Cleared by: Adele Robinson	
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications	
NO	
Human rights Implications	
NO:	
Environmental and Sustainability implications	
NO	
Economic impact	
NO	
Community safety implications	
NO	
Human resources implications	
NO	
Property implications	
NO	
Area(s) affected	
None	
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Member	
Councillor Julie Grocutt	
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?	
NO	
Press release	
NO	

Member Development Progress

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   This report describes the work and progress that has taken place with Member Development at SCC and the plans for its future development.

2.0   BACKGROUND

2.1   For some years, Member Development has been limited at Sheffield City Council to a programme of Member Induction, largely due to resource availability. This is not uncommon at authorities which elect by thirds, since there is a need to conduct an induction programme in three out of every four years. Following a change in administration, a new Chief Executive, and in light of the forthcoming change to a committee system it was felt that a more enhanced Member Development Programme was fundamental to support Members in their roles as they adapt to contextual challenges. The programme also includes general and mandatory training.

3.0   MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

3.1   This report describes the work and progress that has taken place with Member Development at SCC and the plans for its future development.

3.2   Sheffield City Council has embarked upon a Member Development programme for all members. Initially the development programme was divided into four main streams:

- Induction;
- Local Government Association (LGA) courses;
- Local Area Committees (LACs); and
- Transition to a Committee System.

Each stream will now be detailed in turn to describe what training has taken place and/or what the current plans are.

3.3   Induction

3.3.1   Induction development sessions have a varied audience of members. Some sessions are aimed at newly elected Members only, some are committee-specific or role-specific and others are applicable to all Members.

3.3.2   For newly elected Members there are seven development sessions delivered by officers:

- Introduction to the Council,
- Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding,
- Local Government Finance,

- Emergency Planning,
- Public Health,
- Introduction to Planning for Newly Elected Members and
- Policy and Performance,

All but the last three of these sessions has already taken place in September and early October 2021. It is hoped that the other two sessions can be delivered before the end of November.

3.3.3   Attendance to these sessions are shown below:

- Introduction to the Council – 47%
- Local Governemnt Finance – 47%
- Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding – 33%
- Emergency Planning – 33%

3.3.4   Committee-specfic training and development is also offered to Members on specific committees and in some instances to all Members. This is shown in the list below:

- Planning – All planning Members
- HR Appeals Panels – All appeals panel Members
- Licensing – All licensing Members
- Audit & Standards – All audit and standards Members
- Scrutiny – All scrutiny Members
- Equality, Diveristy & Inclusion – All Members
- Information Management – All Members

Some of this training and development has already taken place, some is planned and some is to be arranged.

3.3.5   Mandatory Planning training and development was delivered via three sessions in May 2021, June 2021 and July 2021. Members that have already attended this training within the past two years were not required to attend. All other relevant members have attended this year as required.

3.3.6   HR Appeals Panels training and development is forthcoming.

3.3.7   Licensing training and development has taken place between April 2021 and September 2021 in the following areas:

- Introduction to the Licensing Act 2003
- Introduction to Street Trading
- Licensing Induction Course
- Introduction to The licensing Committee and Hearings
- Introduction to Licensing Policies
- Introduction to Taxi Licensing

- Safeguarding – Protiection of Children and the Vulnerable

The following sessions will be taking place between October 2021 and March 2022:

- Introduction to Safety at Sports Ground Events
- Introduction to the Gambling Act 2005
- Introduction to Commons Registrations and Land Owner Agreements
- Introduction to Setting Licence Fee and Budget
- Introduction to Equality Act 2010 – Disability and Equality Awareness
- Introduction to Sex Establishments and Sexual Entertainment Venues

3.3.8 Audit and Standards training and development is currently being arranged and is to be delivered by an external provider, Ian Fifield, at the request of Members.

3.3.9 Scrutiny training and development took place in early September and was delivered internally. Attendance to this was 57%.

3.3.10 Equality, Diveristy and Inclusion training and development has been arranged internally for the 23th November 2021. 23 Members are so far due to attend.

3.3.11 Information Management training and development is going to be delivered in November. A pre-meet has been arranged for the 26th of October to discuss requirements.

3.4 **Local Government Association Stream**

3.4.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) have offered one year's worth of training and development to SCC. Sessions delivered by the LGA are offered to all Members, however there may be some instances where training is delivered in single party groups. Initial discussions took place of what development sessions would be useful and some sessions started to be arranged.

3.4.2 In early July a single party session was offered to all Members. This session was delivered by a legal and governance officer from Rochdale Council and a Member Peer was also present of the same political party from a different council. The aim of this session was to provide a safe space for Members to bring forward their views and ask any questions that they have. The scope that was covered was:

- Registration of interest
- Code of conduct
- Member/officer relations
- Behaviour
- What members want from the development programme

3.4.3   Overall 51% of members attended one of these party-specific sessions.

3.4.4   Following the party-specific sessions Members were sent a survey to ask for feedback. Twenty-two members responded to this survey, giving an average 3.1 stars out of 5.

3.4.5   Members were also sent a survey to ask them about what their technological training needs were and 27 Members responded. The feedback is shown below:
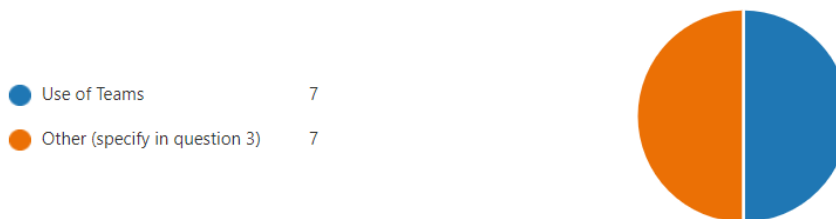
Do you feel you need some training & development on the use of technology to support you in your role? (if you answer 'No' you do **not** need to answer the next few questions)
More Details

● Yes   13
● No   14
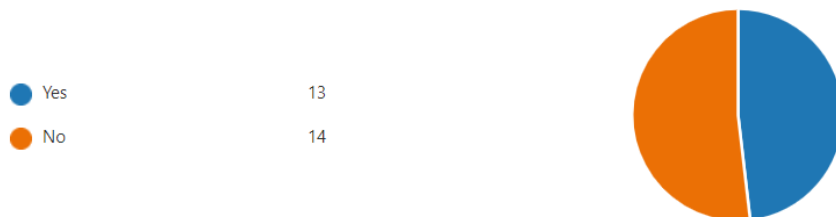
What do you feel you need some training on?
More Details

● Use of Teams   7
● Other (specify in question 3)   7

Some of the members specified that they would like further technological training on:

- Microsoft Office System
- Excel Spreadsheets
- Support as issues arise
- Improving productivity through linking applications
- Access to information on council systems
- Access to intranet
- Printing in Town Hall
- Refresher on use of laptops
- How to use council website effectively

3.4.6   In early September two 'Community Leadership' sessions were offered to all Members. These sessions were duplicates of each other and were offered at different times and days to offer more choice and flexibility to Members. The aim of this was to increase Member participation. These sessions were delivered by an LGA officer and a Member Peer from East Sussex Council. 35% of members

attended.The scope included:

- Collaboration – solutions to problems
- Listening to, and understanding your ward
- Encouraging citizen participation
- Harnessing how communities can work together during a time of need
- Appropriate use of social media
- How to be an effective Ward Councillor
- Local Area Committees

3.4.7   The next stages of training and development from the LGA are in development, with a view to prioritising issues specific to Sheffield's unique situation, including the forthcoming transition to a committee system. Feedback from members about the breadth of issues they would like to see covered is informing this discussion.

3.4.8   From the 7th of June to beginning of July a programme of development for officers was put together at the request of the Empowering Communities Programme (ECP), mainly arising from discussions at the HR Workstream. See the table below. Chairs and Deputy Chairs were invited to the officer sessions if they were available. The aim was to provide an induction for the new Communities teams and was intended to be an ongoing development programme for the Team. Following these sessions the ECP Board felt that Members would benefit from receiving similar development opportunities to assist them in their new roles within the Local Area Committees. Due to the vast array of sessions and demands on Member's time, ten were prioritised to be delivered throughout September - shown in the priority column. Nine out of the ten were delivered and it was the aim to deliver the rest out before 2022, however due to demands on Members' and Officers' time it may well be that these sessions will be delivered in 2022.

Priority	Other Sessions		
City of Sanctuary	Initial Induction	Team Around the Person	Digital Inclusion and connectivity
Parks	Communities Service Event	Housing	City Centre/High Streets/Business Engagement
Sheffield Insights	Covid Hub	Community safety Plans/Prevent etc	Adult Learning, employment and skills
AMEY/Veolia	Community Response	Local political structure TO BE RESCHEDULED	VAS
Family Centres	Roles & Responsibilities	LAC rules, procedures and meetings; LAC governance	Accountable Care Partnership
Libraries	Working in a Political Environment	Cohesion	People Keeping Healthy
Highways	Gov delivery email notification system	Children & Families	
Sheffield Economy	South Yorkshire Police / Community Safety	Adults	
Climate/Greener	City wide Partnerships	Early Help Review	
Environmental Health	Community Support Workers	Grants and grant aid admin	

3.4.9   The Member attendance for each of the sessions is shown below:

- City of Sanctuary – 23%
- Parks – 23%
- Sheffield Insights – 18%
- AMEY/Veolia – 29%
- Family Centres – 31%
- Libraries – 11%
- Sheffield Economy – 23%
- Climate/Greener – 25%
- Environmental Health – 21%

3.5   Transitioning to a Committee System Stream

3.5.1   Initial plans for development under this stream have recently begun. A list of topics was compiled as to what would be the most imminent needs for training and development are. The draft list includes, but is not limited to:

- Scrutiny – whether or not a separate scrutiny committee exists in the new governance model, there will be some statutory scrutiny functions to undertake and, as per the Governance Committee's draft design principles, a need to ensure that decision-makers are effectively held to account by whatever system is in place.
- How to be an effective committee member (including 'how to disagree well').
- Chairing and Vice-chairing in Sheffield's committee system.
- Chairing and Vice-chairing Local Area Committees.

- Community Engagement
- Leadership and decision-making in a committee system.
- Lord Mayor Training
- Audit Committee
- Policy and Performance

Decisions need to be made as to whether the training and development around these areas will be delivered internally or externally and by whom – this is currently in development.

3.6   Additional Training and Plans

3.6.1   Through additional discussions with officers and Members a list of further training and development topics has been raised. The intention is not necessarily to offer specific courses relating to each of these issues separately, but to ensure these issues are covered by the member development programme as a whole over the coming municipal year and induction cycle.

- Personal Safety – Violence against women and all Members
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Carbon Literacy
- Cultural Awareness including eg racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia
- Media & Technology skills
- Conflict Resolution
- Personal Resilience
- Climate Change
- Standards and Member Code of Conduct
- How Local Area Committees work
- Appropriate use of Social Media
- Health and Social Care
- Portfolio Leadership
- Understanding how the NHS works – commissioning and provision

3.7   Feedback

3.7.1   Following each training and development session a short survey is sent via a link to each Member that has attended the session. Members are asked to rate the usefulness of the session to them and also to use the form to follow up with any questions that they may have so that these can be followed up with the relevant officer or stakeholder that has delivered the session.

3.8   Member Working Group

3.8.1   A Member Working Group was formed in mid-September. The group was formed by speaking to the Whips who then liaised with their groups and the following Members offered to be their groups representative for Member Development: Cllr Garry Weatherall, Cllr Sue Alston and Cllr Martin Phipps. The aim of this cross-party group is to discuss Member Development needs, offer informal direction to

officers who are developing this programme when consulted, and to help keep members updated on what is happening with development opportunities and what is being planned. These are informal discussions.

3.9   Member Development Site – SharePoint

3.9.1   It was raised by some Members that they would like a central place to access useful resources and information. A SharePoint area was previously set up for Members following the Covid-19 Pandemic. This has now been updated and enhanced and is available for access. All Members have been informed of this via email and verbally in some training and development sessions. Instructions have been provided on how to access the site. All resources from training sessions are added to this site alongside useful training videos and links to the LGA. There is a direct link to the Local Area Committees SharePoint site too. The link to the site is:

https://sccextranet.sharepoint.com/sites/MembersInformation

3.9.2   In the last 30 days the analytics show that the traffic to this page has had a maximum of 46 page views in any one day. It is hoped that as members become more aware of the usefulness of this new resource, the pages will see more traffic.

3.10   Member Development Strategy and Plan

3.10.1   A formal, four-year Member Development Strategy is being developed for Sheffield City Council in order to formalise and coordinate the above arrangements from May 2022 onwards. The aim is to ensure that member development activity is aligned to the strategic needs of the organisation for years to come. It is envisioned that this will be for members' sign-off although it is not yet confirmed which committee would have jurisdiction for this. Each year an annual member induction and development plan would be agreed in line with the strategy.

3.10.2   Sheffield City Council is dedicated to providing a wider range of training and development opportunities for Members to build on knowledge and develop further skills in order to help them in their roles. Priority training and development will be addressed first followed by additional training that has been requested or suggested. The Member Working Group will be able to act as a communication vehicle from the groups to drive Member Development forwards.

3.10.3   It is to be hoped that an increased focus on the quality and relevance of member development will result in an increased take-up of the offer by members. Attendance rates, while not untypical amongst councils, have not historically been high.

4.0   IMPLICATIONS

4.1   **Financial implications**

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.

4.2 **Legal Implications**

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.

4.3 **Equality of Opportunity Implications**

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'. We have considered our obligations under our Duties and found that whilst there are some direct equality of opportunity implications arising as a result of this report, we have taken our duty into account and at this stage a more detailed EIA is not required. 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 Councils overall Duties. This training is highlighted in the report in several places, following feedback from the training undertaken we will further develop more specific training as required.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That the Committee notes the report on the update on Member Development.

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