



## Report to Governance Committee

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

**Tel:** 0114 2734114

**Report of:** *Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement*

**Report to:** *Governance Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *28 February 2024*

**Subject:** ***Member Role Profiles***

|   |     |                                     |    |                                     |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input 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:**

Action 1.3 in the Governance Review Implementation Plan sets out practical actions to achieve the aim of “Improving how we explain the system” which includes producing 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.

In July 2023, the Governance Committee established the Member Development Working Group (MDWG) and tasked the group with working with officers to produce new role profiles for elected Members. The aim was to develop role profiles for the key roles for elected Members in the Committee System to provide a true representation of the roles and responsibilities 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 also serve as a useful tool for the Independent Remuneration Panel’s (IRP) review of Members’ Allowances and increase transparency with members of the public on the requirements of the roles.

The MDWG met several times during 2023 and the beginning of 2024 to develop a suite of role profiles, primarily focussing on the roles of City Councillor and Policy Committee Chair, Deputy Chair and Group Spokesperson. Officers have provided support through research into role profiles produced by other local authorities and

information and publications from organisations such as the Local Government Association and Institute of Local Government Studies.

This report presents the role profiles for the roles of City Councillor and Policy Committee Chair, Deputy Chair and Group Spokesperson for Member's consideration and adoption.

### **Recommendations:**

The Governance Committee is asked to:

1. Review and provide any final comments on the 4 role profiles of City Councillor, Policy Committee Chair, Policy Committee Deputy Chair and Group Spokesperson.
2. Adopt the 4 role profiles and recommend to Full Council that Article 7 in the Constitution be updated as set out in Appendix B, Role of the Policy Committee Chair.
3. Request the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement, in conjunction with the MDWG, identify the priority areas for member development activity arising from the content of the role profiles and to ensure that these are incorporated in the member development programme.
4. Identify and further roles which city councillors perform for which role profiles might be developed in the future and to ask the Director of Policy & Democratic Engagement, in conjunction with the MDWG, to produce those role profiles for future consideration by the Governance Committee.
5. Note that the Independent Remuneration Panel will undertake a review of Members' Allowances and to request that the Panel:
  - a. has regard to the new role profiles when reviewing the allowances;
  - b. considers whether the role of Group Spokesperson should be awarded a Special Responsibility Allowance.

### **Background Papers:**

[The role of a councillor | Local Government Association](#)

[The Political Skills Framework – a councillor's toolkit](#)

[The 21st Century Councillor Summary Report](#)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: City Councillor Role Profile

Appendix B: Policy Committee Chair Role Profile

Appendix C: Policy Committee Deputy Chair Role Profile

Appendix D: Group Spokesperson Role Profile

Appendix E: Equalities Impact Assessment

| 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: Richard Bartlett             |
|                            |   | 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                          | <b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>  | <i>James Henderson</i>                                  |
| 3                          | <b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>   | <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. |   |
|                            | <b>Lead Officer Name:</b><br><i>Jason Dietsch</i>   | <b>Job Title:</b><br><i>Head of Democratic Services</i> |
|                            | <b>Date:</b> 20/02/2024   |   |

## 1. PROPOSAL

1.1 This report asks the Governance Committee to review and endorse new Member Role Profiles for various leading roles held by Councillors.

### 1.2 **How does this fit with the work of the Governance Committee?**

Improving how we explain the committee system was a critical part of the 6 Month Review of Governance arrangements. There was particular focus on how we better enable elected Members, citizens and officers in the Council to navigate the system and support committees to be effective in their role.

1.3 This is now an action in the Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP), which is to develop clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities for Chairs, Co-Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespersons and how officers are expected to brief and interact with these roles. This has been included in the Governance Committee's work programme to consider the roles of Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Group Spokespersons, and whether current arrangements, including remuneration are appropriate.

1.4 The development of new role profiles also links with the wider work of the Committee and the MDWG on Member development, and links to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor, which is a piece of work undertaken by the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham looking at the roles, skills and support needed for elected Members.

### 1.5 **Current position**

Information on the roles of elected Members is provided in the Constitution: the Articles set out a summary of responsibilities for the role of the City Councillor and the Policy Committee Chair, part 5h sets out the Committee Job-Share Protocol, and the rules for urgent and officer decisions explain the role of the Chair, Deputy Chair and Group Spokespersons in urgent decision making. However, there is not a set of role profiles which bring together the requirements set out in the Constitution and the reality of what each role entails to give a true representation of the responsibilities and duties of each elected Member role. As the Committee system has been operating for nearly two years, there is now a clearer understanding of what is involved in the Policy Committee roles which has enabled accurate role profiles to be developed.

### 1.6 **Purpose of Role Profiles**

The role profiles provide clarity on the purpose, responsibilities and skills for committee related roles:

- to provide clarity for councillors, officers and citizens about what is expected of each role;
- to provide guidance to the Independent Review Panel for the

- Members' Allowances Scheme and reviews of the scheme;
- to support elected Members in their development by providing a checklist to identify their learning and development needs. This includes the roles they are currently undertaking and progression to future roles, to support succession planning;
- to provide information for prospective candidates about councillors' responsibilities; and
- to inform Member Development priorities and programme.

#### 1.7 **New Member Role Profiles**

The first stage of the process was to create an initial draft of each role profile, combining the existing information in the Constitution, feedback provided during recent IRP reviews, examples from other local authorities and guidance from documents such as the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor" produced by INLOGOV and "The role of a councillor" produced by the LGA.

1.8 The MDWG then met to discuss and refine the role profiles, taking into account experiences of Members who were currently in the roles or who had undertaken them previously. The MDWG were keen that the role profiles reflect the changing role of councillors in the committee system and the future needs of the council and local government. In addition, skills and knowledge for each role have been identified to meet the requirements of a future Members' Allowances scheme and support the Member Development Programme of learning and development.

1.9 The role profiles were also shared with the political groups and comments were fed back and discussed in working group meetings. The gathering of feedback highlighted some important areas for inclusion in the role profiles including:

- ensuring that, where responsibilities and skills are the same, there was consistency across the role profiles;
- future proofing the role profiles so they remain relevant for different political scenarios;
- emphasising the role of each Policy Committee Member in scrutiny and the responsibility of the Chair, Deputy Chair and Spokesperson in encouraging the scrutiny role; and
- recognising that the role profiles are guidance documents to aid understanding of the roles and that they are separate from the Councillor Code of Conduct and do not form part of the Constitution.

1.10 Two further issues for consideration were raised by members of the MDWG following their last meeting:

1. Include "responsibility for setting a balanced budget" to the draft City Councillor role profile. It was acknowledged that this falls within point 5 of the role profile, "Make major decisions as part of the Council and provide political / strategic leadership, setting out

the policy and budget framework within which the Council operates.”

2. Include in the Group Spokesperson role profile “In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, to deputise for the Chair at formal and informal meetings of the Committee.” At present, all Policy Committees have two Group Spokespersons, so this poses a further question on how to choose who Chairs in this situation. The Constitution currently states that “In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair at a meeting, the Body shall elect a Chair for that meeting.”

1.11 Subject to their adoption, the role profiles would be made available on the Library area of the Council Meetings webpage, which is accessible by Members, officers and the public. This would enable existing and prospective councillors to gain an understanding of the demands of the roles and to provide transparency for the public.

1.12 The other role profiles currently under development by the MDWG are:

1. Local Area Committee Chair
2. Sub-Committee Chair
3. Audit and Standards Committee Chair
4. Licensing Committee Chair
5. Planning and Highways Committee Chair
6. Scrutiny Committee Chair

1.13 It is proposed that these role profiles, once complete, will be submitted to a future meeting of the Governance Committee for consideration and adoption.

## **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 Role Profiles help to identify the knowledge and skills needed to help shape the Member Development Programme so that it can 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 The membership of the MDWG is cross-party and feedback from each political group has been sought throughout the process. The MDWG has worked collaboratively to develop the draft role profiles and all comments and feedback from Members has been shared with the working group and discussed.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 In creating the new Councillor role profiles, the MDWG have identified the development, training and skills required to fulfil the roles which includes the need for all Members to have an awareness of equalities. Training and development in equalities is incorporated into the Member Development Programme and the MDWG are supporting HR with the roll out of a level 2 equivalent certificate in equality, diversity and inclusion for elected members. The MDWG have oversight of the Member Development and Induction Programmes, this enables Members to provide feedback on any gaps in skills that are required to effectively challenge EDI issues when decision making.

4.1.3 The Government has recently published the Disability Action Plan and the first area of action is to "Support disabled people who want to be elected to public office." Support is available for elected Members through Member Services and reasonable adjustments can be arranged to remove barriers for Members with a disability.

4.1.4 The role profiles set out a detailed overview of the responsibilities associated with each role which:

- improves openness and transparency;
- enables Members to identify where they have support and development needs so that these can be addressed through the Member Development Programme; and
- provides the Independent Remuneration Panel with a comprehensive overview of the roles to support the ongoing review of Member Allowances, ensuring that these are appropriate for the roles to attract diverse councillors.

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

4.2.1 There are no specific financial implications from this report. The role profiles provide a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities of the different elected Member roles, and it is intended that the role profiles will assist the IRP as part of their review of Member's Allowances. The IRP may recommend changes to the level of allowances however any financial implications are dependent upon the action which the Council takes in response to the issues raised in any reports of the IRP. Financial implications associated with any changes would be set out in the IRP's

report to Council.

4.2.2 Learning and development for Members 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 Roles and functions of City Councillors and particular roles in the Council are set out in the Articles of the Constitution. The new role profiles appended to this report include specific proposals for changes and additions to the role of the Chair of Policy Committee, in Article 7 of the Council's Constitution. Any changes to the Articles in the Constitution would require approval by full Council.

4.3.2 In addition, if the Governance Committee agree to introduce provision for the Group Spokesperson to deputise for the Chair and Deputy Chair, this would also require a change to Council Procedure Rule 31: Appointment of Chair.

4.3.3 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 for general and specific Member related roles provides potential opportunities for learning and development activity to improve knowledge and understanding of issues relating to climate.