

Values and Ethics Sub Committee

26th July 21



Report of: Service Director Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Title: Member Development Update

Ward: Citywide

Officer presenting report: Lucy Fleming, Head of Democratic Engagement

Recommendation

That the Committee considers and comments on the update in relation to implementation of the Member Induction and Refresher Programme and the proposed next steps for Member Development.

Summary

A comprehensive programme of activity related to Member Development has been put in place for Members following the elections in 2021, as set out in the report. It is an appropriate time to seek feedback on progress so far and confirm the next tranche of work to improve the support available to Members.



Policy

1. Responsibility for Member Development sits with the Member Development Steering Group and it's been agreed that the Values and Ethics Sub Committee of the Audit Committee will retain a watching brief. Membership of the Member Development Steering Group can be found at Appendix A.
2. The City Council is committed to supporting Members with their development to ensure they have the necessary training to discharge their democratic duties.

Consultation

Internal

3. Member Development Steering Group, Party Group Leaders and Whips.

External

4. Not applicable.

Member Development – progress to date

5. The Member Induction and Refresher Programme has been prepared in conjunction with the Member Development Steering Group and delivery commenced in May 21. The project covers a number of different work streams, which are as set out below;
 - Provision of a welcome pack for newly elected Councillors, which was given to them at the declaration. This contained essential information to ensure Councillors were aware of the 'must knows' to get them through their first few days of office.
 - Arranging the Swearing in Ceremony on Monday 10th May 21, which included a range of other activities such as distribution of IT equipment; completion of essential documentation; HR advice; provision of ID; and the taking of professional photographs etc.
 - Production of a comprehensive, new online resource for Members, which includes an Information Guide consisting of fact sheets about a wide range of areas of interest; advice about how to obtain support; training opportunities; and ward data.
 - Delivery of 72 different Member induction and refresher training topics, each offered in two online sessions at different times of day.
 - Several one-off events arranged to support Members and ensure a smooth start to their term of office including ICT Support; Virtual Tours; and the opportunity to Meet Senior Leaders from each Directorate.
 - Introduction of a new Councillor Link Scheme where Members had the opportunity to be paired with a senior officer to act in an informal mentoring role/provide orientation to the Council. This was taken up by 13 Members.
 - Working with Members to review Councillor ICT provision and ensure that a choice of equipment was available to better meet the needs of elected representatives.
 - Embedding a feedback mechanism (via a short online survey) so Councillors are routinely invited to comment on the training they have received and make suggestions for improvements.
 - Production of a new Member Development Strategy (previously approved by the Values and Ethics Sub Committee in March 21). The Strategy sets out the Council's commitment and approach to continuous Member development, and the opportunities that are

available to all elected representatives. See Appendix B.

Member Development - Next Steps

6. The proposal for the next phase of Member Development activity is to work with the Member Development Steering Group, Values and Ethics Sub Committee and/or Whips and Party Group Leaders to achieve the following;
 - Undertake a review of the Member Induction and Refresher Programme (and associated projects) in order to identify any gaps/remedial action and inform a new protocol to be used following the next local elections in 2024.
 - Complete regular evaluation of the Member Development offer including progress against the key performance measures, as set out in Section 7 of the Member Development Strategy (see Appendix B).
 - Agree, plan and implement the additional training required for Members post induction, both collectively and individually.
 - Recommence the regular fortnightly Member briefings (in September 21).
 - Apply for South West Council's accreditation for Member Development. The objective of the scheme is to;
 - o *Encourage Councils to develop an effective strategy or approach to Councillor development*
 - o *Recognise those Councils that have developed an effective approach*
 - o *Encourage Councils to continue that development and share their experiences and learning.*

The list of things the Council needs to demonstrate to achieve Charter Status can be found at Appendix C. Additional details about the award can be found [here](#).

- Work with the Party Group Leaders to introduce a voluntary scheme where Members are offered Personal Development Plans, if they would like them.
- Rolling out online training records for all Councillors.
- Continually reviewing the Councillors' online resource portal to ensure it remains current and meets evolving needs.
- Schedule updates for the Values and Ethics Sub Committee every six months on the progress around delivery of the agreed activities.

Other Options Considered

7. None necessary.

Risk Assessment

8. Not applicable.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal implications:

9. Not applicable.

Financial:

(a) Revenue

10. An annual budget is allocated for Member development, and to provide administrative support for the delivery of training and facilitating the Member Development Steering Group.

(b) Capital

11. Not applicable.

Land/Property:

12. Not applicable.

Human Resources:

13. Not applicable.

Appendices:

- A – Membership of the Member Development Steering Group
- B – Member Development Strategy 2021-24
 - B1 - Member Development Strategy Action Plan
 - B2 - Member Induction Programme – 21/22 – Overview of Topics
 - B3 - Member Development Steering Group Terms of Reference
- C – South West Council’s Charter Status Requirements

Membership of the Member Development Steering Group for 21/22

Note – this membership is subject to change following discussion with the Whips

- Councillor Alex Hartley
- Councillor Chris Davies
- Councillor Guy Poultney
- Councillor David Wilcox
- Councillor Hibaq Jama
- Councillor Farah Hussain
- Councillor Henry Michallat
- Councillor John Geater