

29 February 2024		ITEM: 9
Standards and Audit Committee		
Member Development Strategy		
Wards and communities affected: Not Applicable	Key Decision: Non-Key Decision	
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Law and Monitoring Officer		
Accountable Assistant Director: Not Applicable		
Accountable Director: Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Law and Monitoring Officer		
This report is Public		
Version: Final		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the Member Development Strategy which contains the principles underpinning the continued Member training offer to Members.

Commissioner Comment:

None.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Comment on the content of the attached Member Development Strategy

1.2 If applicable, agree the Member Development Strategy as drafted or subject to any amendments discussed and endorsed by the committee.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 At the meeting of the Governance Recovery Board (GRB) on 10 July 2023 it was agreed that a strategic approach to Member development was required and should include:

- creating structures so that Members' development needs are better identified;
- ensuring that development opportunities target organisational priorities; and
- ensuring that there is appropriate member led governance arrangements in place

First draft strategy

Version Control (delete as appropriate)

Version 1 - First draft ready for DMT, SLT and Commissioner input; **Version 2** - Second Draft ready for Portfolio Holder, Leader and other Member Input; **Version 3** - Third draft for any further comments; **Version Committee** – Draft ready for submission to public committee; **Version Cabinet** – Final version ready for Cabinet/Executive decision

- 2.2 Officers developed a first draft of a potential Member Development Strategy which is attached to this report. This was agreed at GRB in August 2023.
- 2.3 The strategy sets out a proposed vision and values statement for Member Development whilst stating that its purpose is to outline the support that will be given to Councillors and any Co-opted Members to help them fulfil their roles and contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.
- 2.4 It will ensure that a long-term view of Member Development is taken but is also able to flex to meet changing needs and priorities.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the strategy recognises that Councillors are not employees of the Council and will strive to help them seek a balance between their demanding roles, both inside and outside, the Council.
- 2.6 It is proposed that the governance of Member Development is led by Members through the Standards and Audit Committee function.
- 2.7 The Strategy will be owned by the Council but it will be the responsibility of the Standards function and the Democratic/Member Services team to ensure that the Strategy (and Action Plan) is reviewed and updated to reflect any changes and that it continues to be fit for purpose.
- 2.8 There is also a focus in the strategy on supporting new Members' following their election and this will include the development of a tailored development plan, appointment of mentors and an assigned Democratic Services Officer to help them with their onboarding.

Engagement Plan

- 2.9 The attached strategy is intended as a consultative draft for the Standards and Audit Committee to consider.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Committee are able to comment on any aspect of the Strategy and offer suggestions on the practical application of those activities offered in the document.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The introduction and application of a strategy strengthens the training offer and activities which surround the function within the council. This in turn helps Members develop skills and knowledge in their roles and better inform decision making within the Council.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 GRB and SLT have been consulted on the draft strategy and have agreed it to be used for consultation.

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6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The development of a strategy strengthens Member learning and the experience of that learning. The Strategy will improve Member training and ensure decision making is supported and Members are trained appropriately to make those decisions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**
Interim Finance Manager
(15/01/24)

There are no financial implications.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke, Governance Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer**
(17/01/24)

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report. Arrangements to support Councillors in continuing personal development will ensure that all Councillors have the necessary skills and knowledge, and are aware of the legal requirements to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer
(12/01/24)

There are no direct diversity or equality implications. The Strategy ensures all Members have equal access to Member training opportunities relevant to their needs.

7.4 Risks

The Failure of Members to engage appropriately with training could lead to poor decision making or community leadership. A Member Development Strategy ensures that Member development is managed in line with corporate and democratic requirements.

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7.5 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Draft Member Development Strategy

Report Author:

Matthew Boulter

Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member Services

Legal Services

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