



## **Standards Committee**

Date: Thursday, 17 March 2022

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

### **Access to the Council Chamber**

Public access to the Council Chamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. **There is no public access from the Lloyd Street entrances of the Extension.**

## **Membership of the Standards Committee**

**Councillors** - Andrews, Evans, Good, Lanchbury and Simcock

Councillor O'Donovan (Ringway Parish Council)

**Independent Co-opted Members** - Nicolé Jackson (Chair), Mr G Linnell

**Independent Person** -

**Ms S Beswick and Mr A Eastwood**

## Agenda

---

- 1. Urgent Business**  
To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.
- 2. Appeals**  
To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.
- 3. Interests**  
To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.
- 4. Minutes** 5 - 10  
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021.
- 5. Standards Committee - Annual Report** 11 - 22  
The report of the City Solicitor is enclosed.
- 6. Member Development and Training** 23 - 60  
The report of the City Solicitor is enclosed.
- 7. Social Media Guidance for Members update** 61 - 68  
The report of the City Solicitor is enclosed.
- 8. Standards Committee - work programme** 69 - 76

## Information about the Committee

---

The Standards Committee comprises five city councillors, one parish councillor and two independent members and is chaired by an independent member. The Committee deals with matters relating to the conduct of city and parish councillors and the promotion of ethical standards.

The Independent Persons are appointed by the Council to assist the Council in the consideration of any complaints made against councillors. They are not members of the Standards Committee but they are invited to attend the meeting if they wish to.

The Council aims to ensure that its meetings are as open as possible and confidential business is kept to the strict minimum. When confidential items are involved these are considered at the end of the meeting at which point members of the public are asked to leave.

Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk).

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

Joanne Roney OBE  
Chief Executive  
Level 3, Town Hall Extension,  
Albert Square,  
Manchester, M60 2LA

## Further Information

---

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

Andrew Woods  
Tel: 0161 234 3011  
Email: [andrew.woods@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.woods@manchester.gov.uk)

This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 8 March 2022** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 3, Town Hall Extension (Lloyd Street Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Standards Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021**

#### **Present**

Independent Co-opted Member: N Jackson – In the Chair  
Councillors Andrews, Connolly, Evans, Lanchbury and Simcock

Ringway Parish Council: Councillor O'Donovan

Independent Co-opted Member: G Linnell

#### **Also present:**

Independent Person: Mr A Eastwood

### **ST/21/16          Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held 17 June 2021 were submitted for approval.

The Chair advised the Committee that in respect of Minute number *ST/21/14 Terms of Office of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee and the Council's Independent Persons*, the Independent Co-opted Members and Independent Persons had each agreed to extend their current appointments for a further year, until 18 November 2022.

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 as a correct record.

### **ST/21/17          Dispensations**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that described the operation and efficacy of the process for granting dispensations in relation to Members' Interests. It is the Monitoring Officer's view that the requests for dispensations that have been made, have been sought in appropriate circumstances and that the level of requests for dispensations does not give rise to concern.

A member asked if councillors sponsored by a trade union should seek dispensation for the length of their four year term, rather than seeking dispensation on individual matters.

The City Solicitor advised the Committee that introducing a blanket dispensation could be problematic and it would be more appropriate to use the dispensation process on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Decision**

To note the report

### **ST/21/18          Planning Protocol**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that described the operation and efficacy of the Planning Protocol. Members noted that the Planning Protocol sets out a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct in the discharge of the Council's duty as local planning authority and it is considered to be effective in doing so.

The Committee was advised that the Planning Protocol is kept under review and amendments will be considered as circumstances may arise. Members were advised of one issue regarding late representations to Planning and Highways Committee that is currently being discussed. The process allows the receipt of late representations prior to a cut off of 4pm, two days prior to the meeting that will consider the application. A supplementary agenda is then issued the day before the meeting that includes late representations and the planning officer responses. It was reported that there have been occasions where late representations are submitted on the morning of the meeting and the lateness and detail of the submission, in some instances have resulted in only a verbal update being given that prevented the planning officer from providing a complete response and detailed advice to the Committee. The short length of time had on occasion resulted in the application being deferred to a later date. The Committee were asked if it had any comments.

A member referred to the importance of committee members having all of the information prior to a meeting that allows them to read and understand the application and the two day cut off for the submission of late representations appeared to be a sensible rule. Officers were asked if the information being presented at such a late stage of the process was due to the circumstances of a particular application or could it be due to an accepted practice that had developed over a period of time.

The Committee was advised that the planning application process allows opportunities to make submissions and it was unlikely that a very late submission would have a significant impact on the application.

A member referred to the protocol that provides the opportunity during a Planning and Highways Committee for the public to speak for four minutes and ward Councillors to speak to planning applications and made the point that this allowed further late representations to be made. Reference was also made to the use of site visits for lobbying committee members and officers were asked if ward councillors who were not a member of the Planning and Highways Committee and members of the public are allowed to attend a site visit.

The Committee was informed that ward councillors and members of the public could attend a site visit, if it is in a public place. The Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee would use their discretion on the reasons of individuals attending and make it clear that lobbying the committee members is not allowed. The purpose of a site visit is to help provide committee members with additional information and local knowledge of the application site and the surrounding area and not an opportunity to lobby members of the committee. If committee members were being lobbied or pressured, the officers present would discourage this and advise everyone present of the planning procedure. The Committee were advised that members are reminded of

the purpose and reasons for the site visit and this is explained to members of the public in attendance.

The Committee endorsed a deadline of 4:00pm two days prior to the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee for the submission of late representations.

### **Decision**

To note the report and note the potential amendment to the Planning Protocol.

### **ST/21/19          Register of Members Interests**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that described the operation of the Register of Members' Interests. The Monitoring Officer is of the view that Register of Interests requirements are understood by Members but will, as a matter of good practice, continue to issue specific guidance to all Members regarding declaration of interests at meetings.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ST/21/20          Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members**

The Committee considered the report of the operation and efficacy of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

### **ST/21/21          Review of the Operation and Efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that described the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol. The Monitoring Officer did not consider that any amendment of the Protocol is required at this time. However, when the Code of Conduct for Members is next subject to substantive change, the Monitoring Officer does consider that a full review of the Protocol should be undertaken to align the Protocol with the revised Code.

### **Decision**

To note the position set out in the report submitted, regarding the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol.

### **ST/21/22          Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members**

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that invited the Committee to consider the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members. It is the view of the Monitoring Officer, for the reasons highlighted within the report, that Manchester should retain the current code of conduct. It was recommended that the central government response to CSPL recommendations and any legislative changes should be awaited before changing Manchester's code, noting that the Government's response is expected by the end of this year.

A member of the Committee endorsed the recommendation to defer consideration and recommendations regarding adoption of the LGA model code of conduct.

The Chair stated that it was important for the Committee to monitor the government response to the CSPL recommendations and the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members would be placed on the Committee Work Programme for each meeting in preparation for the Government's response.

The City Solicitor reported that if any changes were made to the code of conduct, members would be briefed, and training would be provided to ensure members were made aware of what is required of them.

### **Decision**

1. To defer consideration and recommendations regarding adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct, pending the receipt of central government's response the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommendations and any legislative changes.
2. To request a further report on consideration and recommendations regarding adoption of the LGA model code be submitted to the next appropriate meeting, when the Government's response is available and that the subject be added to the Committee's workplan for each meeting, until it is received.

### **ST/21/23      Members' Update on Ethical Governance**

The members considered the report of the City Solicitor that sought the Committee's comments on and approval of the draft Members' Update on Ethical Governance for November 2021. A draft of the Members' Update for November 2021 was set out in the Appendix to the report. Members were asked to provide comments on the draft and to approve its content for circulation to all members by e-mail. A paper copy would be available on request.

Reference was also made to cyber training and it was suggested that the Members Development Committee be requested to contact members to ensure they have undertaken the training.

The City Solicitor reported that a reminder will be circulated to all members of the Council to remind them of the importance of undertaking cyber training, if they have not already done so.

### **Decision**



To approve the content of the draft Members' Update on Ethical Governance, as set out in the Appendix of the report submitted, for circulation to all members.

**ST/21/24            Work Programme for the Standards Committee**

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that invited the members of the Standards Committee to consider its work programme for future meetings and make any revisions.

**Decision**

To note the report and agree the Work Programme, with the inclusion of the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members for each meeting of the Committee.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – 17 March 2022

**Subject:** Standards Committee – Annual Report

**Report of:** City Solicitor

---

### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to update members of the Standards Committee on the matters within the remit of the Committee since the beginning of February 2021.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To report on the matters within the remit of the Standards Committee since the last annual report in March 2021 and the work done by the Council's Monitoring Officer during the period to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors.
  2. To seek the views of the Committee regarding whether this report should be forwarded to full Council for assurance on standards issues
- 

### **Wards Affected All**

---

**Financial Consequences – Revenue None**

**Financial Consequences – Capital None**

---

### **Contact Officers:**

Name: Fiona Ledden  
 Position: City Solicitor  
 Telephone: 0161 234 3087  
 E-mail: fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Poornima Karkera  
 Position: Head of Governance Legal Services.  
 Telephone: 0161 234 3719  
 E-mail: poornima.karkera@manchester.gov.uk

### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Annual Report to Standards Committee – March 2021

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the matters within the remit of the Standards Committee since the last annual report in March 2021 which covered the period up to 31 January 2021 and to summarise the work undertaken by the Council's Monitoring Officer from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022.

## **2.0 The Roles of the Standards Committee and the Council's Monitoring Officer**

- 2.1 The role and functions of the Standards Committee and the Council's Monitoring Officer ('MO') are set out in the Council's Constitution and reproduced for ease of reference in Appendix 1 to this Report. The Standards Committee generally meets 3 times a year, in March, June and October /November.

## **3.0 Update on matters within the remit of the Standards Committee since its last Annual Report**

- 3.1 Since its last annual report the Committee has:
- Considered the draft Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 insofar as it related to the terms of reference of this Committee.
  - Reviewed the operation and efficacy of the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against members
  - Reviewed the operation and efficacy of the Use of Resources Guidance for Members
  - Considered the membership of and made appointments to the Standards (Hearing) Sub-Committee
  - Reviewed the procedure for the Hearing of Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Code of Conduct for Members
  - Made recommendations regarding the extension of the terms of Office of the Independent Members of this Committee and the Independent Persons
  - Considered the operation and the efficacy of the process for granting dispensations in relation to members' interests.
  - Considered the operation and the efficacy of the Planning Protocol
  - Considered the operation of the Register of Members' Interests
  - Considered the operation and the efficacy of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members
  - Considered the operation and the efficacy of the Member/Officer Protocol
  - Received an update report on the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members.
  - Approved the content of the Members' Update on Ethical Guidance Update.

#### **4.0 Update on matters considered by the Committee**

- 4.1 The report relating to the efficacy and operation of Gifts and Hospitality Guidance indicated that during the period 1 January to 30 September 2021 two entries had been recorded. One member has updated their entry in relation to gifts or hospitality since then. The current threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality is £100. The Monitoring Officer is of the view, bearing in mind covid issues and the threshold, this level is unsurprising .
- 4.2 As usual reminders to Members regarding updating their Register of Interests are contained in the Ethical Governance Update sent to all Members and in email reminders sent to Members during the course of the year. Email reminders were sent to members in June 2021 and January 2022 As indicated in the report on this matter in November 2021 between 1 January and 30 September 37 members had updated their Register of Interests. A further 20 members have updated their registers between 1 October 2021 and 31 January 2022. Members will be aware it is the responsibility of individual Members to comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Members including regarding members' interests. As a matter of good practice specific guidance will continue to be provided to Members regarding declaration of interests at meetings where necessary
- 4.3 It remains the view of the MO that the codes and guidance are well understood by Members. The MO is not aware of any queries or issues that have not been addressed through existing procedures.
- 4.4 A report on the operation and efficacy of dispensations was last considered by this Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2021. Other than normal budget dispensations no further dispensations have been sought since the date of that report. It is the Monitoring Officer's view that there are no issues regarding requests for dispensations that give rise to concern.

#### **5.0 Councillor Training and Awareness**

- 5.1 There is a separate report on this agenda relating to Member Training and Development. An edition of the Ethical Guidance for Members was circulated to all members in March 2021 and November 2021. Copies of these updates were also provided to newly elected members following by-elections.

#### **6.0 Complaints against Councillors**

- 6.1 There are 3 potential stages through which a complaint may proceed:

*Stage 1 - Initial Assessment stage where the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Council's Independent Person, will decide whether to reject the complaint, seek informal resolution of the matter or refer the complaint for formal Investigation.*

*Stage 2 - Where a complaint is referred for Investigation, the Monitoring*

*Officer will appoint an Investigating Officer to investigate the matter.*

*Stage 3 - If the Investigating Officer's final report concludes that there is sufficient evidence of a failure by the Member to comply with the Code, the Monitoring Officer will consult with the Independent Person before either seeking a local resolution to the matter or sending the allegation before the Hearing Panel for determination.*

- 6.2 The last Annual report covered the period October 2019 to 31 January 2021. The Monitoring Officer has received 12 complaints about Manchester City Councillors between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022. This compares with 15 complaints received in the previous year.
- 6.3 Of the 12 complaints received:
- 1 was not pursued by the complainant;
  - 8 were rejected at Stage 1 as set out in the table below;
  - 3 were resolved informally;
  - None of these 12 were sent for investigation.
- 6.4 The timeframes within the Council's Arrangements for dealing with complaints that Council Members have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members ("the Arrangements") are as follows:
- (a) The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days of all required information being provided and at the same time, the Monitoring Officer will write to the Subject Member with a copy of the complaint
  - (b) The Subject Member may, within 10 working days of being provided with a copy of the complaint, make written representations to the Monitoring Officer
  - (c) A decision regarding whether the complaint merits formal investigation or another course of action will normally be taken within 20 working days of either receipt of representations from the Subject Member or where no representations are submitted 20 working days of the expiry of the period mentioned in paragraph (b) above.
- 6.5 There has been a further improvement in the timeliness of processing complaints once received with only 1 of the 12 complaints received being not being acknowledged and forwarded to the subject member for comment within the 10 working day timeframe. This complaint only slightly exceeded the timeframe by 3 working days.
- 6.6 4 of the 12 complaints received exceeded the 20 working day timeframe for taking an initial assessment decision following receipt of the subject member's response to the complaint. It is expected that the additional diarising and monitoring that is now undertaken will help further reduce any such delays in the future.

6.7 Complaints Summary: Decisions on Complaints made between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022

Complaint No.	Provision of the code alleged to have been breached	Outcome
CCM2021.01	Not indicated by complainant	Complaint not pursued by complainant. Complainant did not complete a complaint form as requested
CCM2021.02	Compromise the impartiality of those who work for the Council Prevent another person from gaining access to information Bringing office into disrepute Use position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on another person Did not use Council resources in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with the Council's Independent Person (IP). No breach of the Members' Code of Conduct apparent. Allegations of misleading statements not substantiated.
CCM2021.03	Bringing office into disrepute	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with the IP. Monitoring Officer (MO) The complaint seemed to have arisen as a result of a misunderstanding which could have been resolved informally and did not merit further action.
CCM2021.04	Bringing office into disrepute	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with IP. The Member was not acting in their official capacity as a member of the Council at the time of the alleged failure to comply with the Code. SM did not appear to be at fault in any event
CCM2021.05	Bullying / Being Abusive Bringing office into disrepute Use position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on another person	Resolved Informally. Following consultation with the IP the MO recommended at Stage 1 that the complaint be resolved informally by the SM apologising to the complainant. Both complainant & SM accepted.

CCM2021.06	Cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010 Bringing office into disrepute Use position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on another person	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with IP. No evidence that SM had acted improperly. Complainant appears to have been vexatious against other individuals in the Council
CCM2021.07	Bringing office into disrepute (Complaint against two Members)	Complaints rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with IP. The MO was satisfied that the two SMs had responded to the complainant's emails and made real attempts to deal with the issues raised by the Complainant, both before and after the complaints were raised
CCM2021.08	Bullying / Being Abusive Bringing office into disrepute	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with the IP. MO was of the view that the Subject Member was clear that he had responded in a way he considered to be supportive and would have recommended that the complaint be resolved informally by the SM making an apology but for the fact that the complainant had expressed the view that an informal resolution would not be satisfactory. Complaint therefore rejected because it was not serious enough to merit formal action. There was no overriding public benefit in carrying out an investigation. To pursue an investigation would be disproportionate & not a good use of public funds
CCM2021/09	Cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010 Bringing office into disrepute Use position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on another person	Resolved informally. The complaint related primarily to matters dealt with by officers.. The Complainant was offered an apology that the response was not one that took account fully of his request for reasonable adjustments which resolved the matter



CCM2021/10	Bullying / Being Abusive Failure to disclose/register an interest	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with the IP. The complaint related to an alleged failure to declare an interest and an allegation of bullying. It was the view of the MO that no conflict of interest existed in the circumstances and bearing in mind all the circumstances there was no overriding public benefit in carrying out an investigation.
CCM2021/11	Bullying / Being Abusive Intimidating a complainant/ witness Prevented another person from gaining access to information Bringing office into disrepute Use position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on another person	Complaint rejected at Stage 1 following consultation with the IP. Even if the allegations were found to be proven following an investigation, the alleged misconduct in the majority of them did not occur when the subject member was acting in his official capacity as a Member of the Council and were so long ago that those involved were unlikely to be able to recollect the facts clearly.
CCM2021/12	Cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010 Bullying / Being Abusive Disclosed confidential information Bringing office into disrepute	Resolved Informally. Following consultation with the IP the MO recommended at Stage 1 that the complaint be resolved informally by the SM apologising to the complainant. There seemed to be a misunderstanding and the Subject member indicated they had not intended to cause distress.

6.8 One complaint which had been referred for formal investigation was completed in June 2021. The Investigating Officer's view was that the behaviour complained of by the Subject Member was not unreasonable in the circumstances and concluded that there was no breach of the Member Code of Conduct. This was accepted by the Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Independent Person. The Investigating officer who completed the Investigation did so following their appointment within the timeframe set out in the Arrangements

- 6.9 It is the view of the Monitoring Officer that no particular pattern emerges from the complaints received. A number of complaints alleged that the subject member bullied or was abusive. Whilst this may seem to raise a theme in all of those cases the alleged bullying/being abusive was only one of a number of provisions of the code that were alleged to have been breached. Some appear to have arisen due to distress felt which was not intended and where possible these were resolved informally by way of apology.
- 6.10 As the Committee will be aware complaints about failure to register a DPI are subject to criminal sanction. The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any action having been taken by the Police in relation to DPI requirements regarding Manchester Councillors.

## **7.0 Recommendations:**

The recommendations appear at the front of this report.

## Appendix 1

### The role of the Standards Committee

Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives;

Assisting Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Members;

Advising the Council on the adoption, revision or replacement of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and the Council's Arrangements for dealing with Complaints that Council Members and Co-opted voting members of the Health and Wellbeing Board have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members ("the Council's Arrangements");

Monitoring the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and the Council's Arrangements;

Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and other issues relating to Standards and Conduct;

To take decisions in respect of a Council Member who is found on a hearing held in accordance with the Council's Arrangements to have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members ("the Subject Member") following referral by the Monitoring Officer for a Hearing conducted by a subcommittee of the Standards Committee;

To grant dispensations from section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 (after consultation with one of the Council's Independent Persons) if having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the Standards Committee:

- considers that granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
- considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

To determine appeals against the Monitoring Officer's decision on the grant of dispensations;

To deal with any reports from the Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred to it for determination;

To deal with reports of the Monitoring Officer regarding breaches of the protocols/guidance to Members accompanying the Council's Code of Conduct for Members which do not in themselves constitute a breach of that Code;

To report from time to time to Council on ethical governance within the City Council;

To consider the Code of Corporate Governance and the Annual Governance Statement.

### **The Responsibilities of the Council's Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer role is to support the Standards Committee, to handle complaints about Members and promote and maintain high standards of conduct. She has delegated authority under the Council's constitution:

- To act as the Council's Proper Officer to receive complaints that Council members have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members;
- To determine, after consultation with the Independent Person and in accordance with the Council's Arrangements for dealing with complaints that Council Members have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members ("the Council's Arrangements") whether to reject or informally resolve or investigate a complaint;
- To seek informal resolution of complaints that Council Members have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members wherever practicable;
- To refer decisions dealing with a complaint against a Council Member to the Standards Committee in exceptional circumstances;
- To arrange for the appointment of an Investigating Officer to investigate a complaint where the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Independent Person) determine that a complaint merits formal investigation;
- To issue guidance to be followed by an Investigating Officer on the investigation of complaints;
- To determine, after consultation with the Independent Person and in accordance with the Council's Arrangements, to confirm an Investigating Officer's finding of no failure to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members;
- Where an Investigating Officer's report finds that the Subject Member has failed to comply with Council's Code of Conduct for Members, to determine, after consultation with the Independent Person and in accordance with the Council's Arrangements, either to seek a local resolution or to send a matter for local hearing;
- To make arrangements to advertise a vacancy for the appointment of:
  - i Independent Persons; and
  - ii Co-Opted Independent Members

- To make arrangements, in consultation with the Chair of the Council's Standards Committee for short-listing and interviewing candidates for appointment as Independent Persons and to make recommendations to Council for appointment;
- To prepare and maintain a Council Register of Member's Interests to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, and ensure that it is available for inspection and published on the Council's website as required by the Act;
- To prepare and maintain a register of Member's interests for Ringway Parish Council to comply with the Localism Act 2011 and the Code of Conduct adopted by Ringway Parish Council and ensure that it is available for inspection as required by the Act;
- To grant dispensations from Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 if, having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the Monitoring Officer:
  - (i) considers that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) of the Localism Act from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business; or
  - (ii) considers that without the dispensation each member of the Council's Executive would be prohibited by section 31(4) of the Localism Act from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the Council's Executive;
  - (iii) considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Manchester City Council Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – 17 March 2022

**Subject:** Member Development and Training

**Report of:** City Solicitor

### **Summary**

To update Standards Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Member Development Strategy and training delivered since February 2021. To seek the Standards Committee's comments on and approval of the Member Development Strategy 2022-24.

### **Recommendations**

1. To approve the Member Development Strategy 2022-24.
2. To note the report on training delivered since February 2021.

**Wards Affected** All

**Financial Consequences – Revenue** None

**Financial Consequences – Capital** None

### **Contact Officers:**

Name: Fiona Ledden  
 Position: City Solicitor  
 Telephone: 0161 234 3087  
 E-mail: Fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jonathan Kershner  
 Position: Head of Business Support and Development (Legal Services)  
 Telephone: 0161 600 8599  
 E-mail: jonathan.kershner@manchester.gov.uk

### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Standards Committee – 21 March 2019 – Member Development Strategy

## Background

- 1.0** Standards Committee last received a report on Member training and development in March 2021. The purpose of this report is to present to the committee a refreshed Member Development Strategy 2022 -2024 and a detailed report on all training delivered since the last report.
- 1.1 Member Development Strategy**
- 1.2** The Member Development Strategy 2019 – 21 was approved by Standards Committee at its meeting of 21 March 2019.
- 1.3** The strategy set out a clear direction for delivering on Member development - focusing on the following key objectives:
- Ensure all Members are well equipped with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to enable them to fulfil their various roles effectively and to the best of their ability.
  - Ensure that all members have equal access to training and development opportunities, providing extra resources to accommodate those with special requirements.
  - Support a consistent approach to learning and development for Members
  - Ensure that new Members are fully supported during induction and beyond to allow them to carry out their duties effectively, as quickly as possible.
  - Broaden knowledge around Council business and areas of changing priorities.
  - Encourage a supportive environment where Members help to develop their colleagues.
  - Ensure that the learning and development of Members is recognised as crucial to the Council's success and to the success of the Our Manchester Strategy.
  - Facilitate regular assessment of training needs and the learning and development programme by members.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme and the Member Development strategy.
  - Facilitate a planned and strategic approach to member development
  - Establish an effective Member Development Group
  - Develop and deliver (with Member involvement and engagement) an effective Member Learning and Development Programme.
- 1.4** It was agreed at the March 2021 meeting of Standards Committee that the strategy should be extended until 2022 and then fully reviewed. A copy of the reviewed Strategy 2022-24 can be found at Appendix A, with key changes highlighted in bold italics.
- 1.5** The main changes to the strategy are an increased focus on 2 key Council priorities around Equalities and Carbon Zero and to reallocate the responsibilities of the Member Development Working Group to the new



Deputy Leader who took up the portfolio responsibility for member development and training in May 2021. A greater emphasis has been placed in relation to training and development for individual members on the use of Personal Development Plans to inform individual training needs. The starting point being an offer to all Councillors for a one to one meeting to discuss their development needs with a representative from within the Group or where no Group then existed with an officer from HR. By participating in these meetings Councillors have the opportunity to influence the training provision and ensure its relevance.

- 1.6 The outcome from these meetings identified training needs in some priority areas including Safeguarding, Equalities, Carbon Literacy, Social Media and Finance.
- 1.7 There was a requirement that any training offered should be of a high quality and where appropriate, externally delivered. Furthermore, that there should be greater emphasis placed on the content of training and its relevance to members to fulfil their roles.

## **2.0 New Member Induction 2021**

- 2.1 The New Member Induction programme 2021 was split into 3 sessions. The first session focused on legal and constitutional matters, including code of conduct for members, gifts and hospitality guidance, data protection, member / officer relations, access to information/need to know, use of Council resources guidance, Social Media guidance and governance and decision making. There was also an interactive session where members worked through a case study. The afternoon focused on an introduction to Members Services, a tour of members' facilities, general housekeeping and the allocation of devices by ICT.
- 2.2 The second session was held one week later in the afternoon following full Council. It focused on key information, including 'Our Manchester', 'listening in action' events and an invitation to attend the 'Our Manchester' Experience, Key Strategies, Equality and Diversity and Finance.
- 2.3 The third session was held a further 2 weeks later and was again an afternoon session. It focused on Casework, Member Safety and Member Development. The first part of the Casework presentation was delivered by the Head of Neighbourhoods focusing on their service and how they can support members. The second part was delivered by an experienced Councillor and focused on practical advice and tips.
- 2.4 There was 100% attendance at all 3 sessions. Following the final session an electronic feedback form was sent out to all.
- 2.5 New members were provided with a Members Handbook. This guide covers basic information on how the Council is organised, decision making, the role of officers and directorate responsibilities as well as more practical matters such as claiming allowances and health and safety. Each section signposts

members to the appropriate contact in the Council, where further information can be obtained. The handbook is a digital document which allows it to be regularly refreshed and updated. Also provided was a key contacts list of officers across the Council broken down by service area.

- 2.6 All slides from the 3 sessions were shared with the new members. Following requests from the new members additional information was also shared with them including on procurement, climate change, affordable housing and detailed service structure charts.
- 2.7 There have also been 2 focused inductions of newly elected Councillors following by-elections since May 2021.

### **3.0 Induction Feedback from May 2021**

- 3.1 A feedback evaluation form was sent out to all Members who attended the 3 sessions. 8 out of 10 completed a response.
- 3.2 The overall satisfaction rating for the programme averaged out at 3.9 out of 5. One Councillor rated it as 2 out of 5 which due to the small sample size had a disproportionate impact on the overall rating. It is worth noting that 3 of the Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. When asked about the relevance of the programme to their role the average rating was 4.3 out of 5.
- 3.3 Session1 (morning) - Average Rating 4.3 out of 5, with 4 of the Councillors rating it as 5 out of 5. Overall comments were positive although some commented that they would have liked Casework to have been part of this first session (see further comments below)
- 3.4 Session 1 (afternoon) - Average Rating 3.9 out of 5. 1 Councillor rated this session 1 out of 5 which again will have had a disproportionate impact on the overall rating. 4 Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. Although the comments were positive around staff helpfulness there was a common theme around the distribution of IT equipment and the support provided with it.
- 3.5 Session 2 – Average Rating 3.6 out of 5. 1 Councillor rated it 1 out of 5 another 2 out of 5. 3 rated it 5 out of 5. Comments were that this session might have been better delivered at a later stage. Feedback on the finance presentation was positive.
- 3.6 Session 3 – Average Rating 4.1 out 5. 1 Councillor rated it 2 out of 5, whilst 4 Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. Almost all who responded felt that the casework element should have taken place earlier in the programme as they were receiving casework from day one. They would also have liked training on the Caseworker system earlier.

### **4.0 Proposals for New Member Induction 2022**

- 4.1 The feedback from 2021 has been considered in detail. 2021 was the first year that new member induction had been split over 3 sessions.

- 4.2 One of the problems this created, as highlighted in the feedback above, was that the session on Casework was delivered to new members more than three weeks after having been elected by which time many were already involved in their casework.
- 4.3 To address this issue it is proposed to hold a shorter Session 2 as soon as possible after Session 1 ideally later that same week , to be held in the late afternoon, either virtually or face to face to suit member preference. This session will cover Casework and Member safety. Neighbourhood services will also be asked to provide useful information for inclusion in the Members handbook and ensure that Neighbourhood managers contact their new members at the earliest opportunity. Training for the Caseworker system will also be organised to follow on at the earliest opportunity. It is hoped that the combination of these measures will better support new members in managing their caseload from the outset.
- 4.4 Session 3 will follow a few weeks later and cover Budget and Key Strategies( to include Our Manchester, Zero Carbon). New members will also be invited to attend the Our Manchester experience and Listening in Action events.
- 4.5 Equality and Diversity and Carbon Literacy training will be delivered as stand alone, in-depth training modules outside of the induction sessions and form part of the new members on-going development. New members will also be expected to complete Cyber Security e-learning.
- 4.6 In relation to the feedback on the distribution of IT equipment there were clearly additional challenges in 2021 with distributing equipment in a Covid secure environment. However, some of the new members felt that they needed more support when receiving their equipment and being introduced to Council IT systems.
- 4.7 Discussion have taken place with ICT who are looking into the possibility of having additional staff available to support the new member induction. In addition, it has also been suggested that new members have their IT needs assessed at the handover session so that those who require additional support can be provided with it outside of the session in a focused way.

## **5.0 Member training February 2021 – January 2022**

- 5.1 Covid has continued to impact on delivery of training, particularly face to face training. In relation to the key training needs highlighted in 1.7 above the majority are scheduled to take place within the current municipal year.
- 5.2 The Member Development Strategy determined that training and development would be classified as follows
- Mandatory.
  - General - suitable for all, to ensure members are able to fulfil their roles.
  - Specific - promoted to further develop skills/knowledge in a particular area.

The mix of training provided against these categories can be found in Appendix B.

- 5.3 In addition to the training highlighted in Appendix B, 5 members have attended Listening in Action events and 2 the 'Our Manchester' experience. There have also been 3 presentations to all members at full Council – 'Benefits of Development' 'Covid update' and 'Our Year 2022' - ( a presentation by Young People from various schools in the city ). E-learning continues to be available on Information Governance, Health and Safety and a wide variety of courses on softer skills such as effective communication, handling difficult situations etc. As members will be aware Ethical Guidance Newsletters are circulated to members twice a year.
- 5.4 In relation to Carbon Literacy certification, 54 members are fully trained and certified, 2 are awaiting certification and 9 have part completed the training programme. Attaining certification requires a significant time commitment of over 6 hours spread over a number of sessions. Working closely with the Executive Member for Environment, the Carbon Literacy training team are arranging future face to face sessions after full Council or an alternative offer of Zoom sessions, to encourage those remaining 30 members to complete this key training priority.
- 5.5 In relation to Equalities training, a fresh approach was called upon following a review of the Unconscious bias e-learning module by the then Deputy Leader and another Executive member. It was agreed that this key training for Members should be face to face and not e-learning. This has led to the commissioning of a bespoke package for Members on Inclusion, Anti-Racism & Implicit Bias training. This will include a pre-training assessment form which attendees will be required to complete and a post event assessment report which may include the identification of further training needs.

## **6.0 Attendance**

- 6.1 Attendance levels at non-mandatory training events compared to the number who booked on, remained relatively high at 77%. This however is reflective of a relatively small number of training events where the non-attendance of 1 or 2 members will have a disproportionate impact on the overall figures.
- 6.2 In line with the Member Development Strategy, email reminders were sent to members 7 days prior to training events. Where possible training is provided in afternoon/early evening sessions to suit member preferences and encourage attendance.
- 6.3 Where there has been non-appearance by members to training which they were expected to attend, they have been contacted in order to understand the reasons for non-attendance. Reasons given were varied and included 'IT problems/Wi-fi connectivity' and 'urgent matter arising'. To support members in virtual training sessions staff from Members Services attend where possible to troubleshoot issues members have when joining the training.

- 6.4 Use of sanctions for non-attendance at training was considered in the March 2019 report to Standards Committee on member training. It was agreed at that meeting not to impose sanctions but to keep the situation under review. As attendance levels remained generally good, the Monitoring Officer did not feel that further consideration of sanctions was necessary at the time of this report. It would appear that the measures being utilised are encouraging regular attendance. However, attendance levels will continue to be closely monitored. Should levels deteriorate then further consideration will be given to asking the committee to reconsider this option.

## **7.0 Evaluation of training**

- 7.1 Feedback from members is a crucial element in evaluating the quality of training being provided. For in-house training we used the evaluation form adopted as part of the Member Development strategy. Generally external trainers use their own evaluation methods and we encourage them to share this information with us. In some instances, our internal form has also been used to gather feedback from external training. Analysis of feedback from both internal and external training shows 97% felt that the training had met the aims and objectives whilst 91% would recommend the training to others.

## **8.0 Scheduled training for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year**

- 8.1 As highlighted in 5.5 above, the Equalities training is being organised to take place late March 2022. Social Media training is scheduled for late February 2022. Safeguarding training, which was trialed by Executive members in November 2021, is being offered out to all members with 2 sessions scheduled for March 2022. Directorship training will be offered out in 2 sessions in late March/ April 2022.

## **9.0 Training Programme - May 2022- April 2023**

- 9.1 Work is now taking place to produce a training programme for the 2022/23 municipal year. The programme will be considered by the Monitoring Officer and lead member for Training and Development before being circulated to members and chief officers.
- 9.2 The mix of training will reflect the mandatory, general and specific categories as referred to in paragraph 5.2 above. It is intended to include subjects such as Local Government finance and public speaking which were identified as part of the needs analysis conducted with members. There will also be a further offer of the Equalities training to support the new cohort of Councillors after the May 2022 elections and a similar offer in relation to Carbon Literacy certification.
- 9.3 Training will be offered in the most appropriate setting. There is likely to be an increase in physical face to face training compared to the last 2 years. However, the benefits of virtual training sessions in providing greater flexibility and reducing travel will continue to be utilised.

**10.0 Training for co-opted members**

- 10.1 As recommended by Standards Committee in March 2021, consideration has been given to appropriate training for co-opted members. One such area is Cyber Security and, as of the date of writing this report, it is expected that all co-opted members will shortly be receiving an invite to participate in an updated Cyber Security e-learning module. In December 2021 the independent member on Audit Committee attended the in-house committee training coordinated by the Head of Audit and Internal Risk.

**11.0 Recommendation**

To approve the Member Development Strategy 2022-24. That the committee note the report on training delivered since February 2021.



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

# Member Development Strategy

*2022 - 2024*

## Document Control

<b>Title</b>	Member Development Strategy
<b>Document Type</b>	Strategy document
<b>Author</b>	Jonathan Kershner
<b>Owner</b>	Member Development Working Group
<b>Subject</b>	Member Development
<b>Government Security Classification</b>	Official
<b>Created</b>	30/01/2019
<b>Approved by</b>	Fiona Ledden, City Solicitor
<b>Date of Approval</b>	25/02/2019
<b>Review due</b>	2 years from date of approval or earlier where there is a change in the applicable law or Council policy, affecting this strategy

## Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description of Change
1.0	30/01/2019	Jonathan Kershner,(JK) Head of Business Support and Development, Legal Services.	First Publication
1.1	04/03/2020	JK	Updates to Appendix A, Update to Appendix B - new question added to evaluation form
1.2	05/02/2021	JK	Minor changes, Strategy extended to 2022, update to New Member Induction and Appendix A.
2.0	11/02/2022	JK	Strategy fully reviewed.
2.1			
2.2			
2.3			
3.0			



# **Content**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Our Vision**
- 3. Our Objectives**
- 4. Key Responsibilities**
- 5. Identifying learning and development needs**
- 6. Delivering training and development**
- 7. Feedback and Evaluation**
- 8. Resources**
- 9. Review of this strategy**

## 1. Introduction

Our vision for Manchester as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy is to be in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025 and to be somewhere that is:

- Thriving
- Full of Talent
- Fair
- A great place to live
- Connected

***Up to 2025, as we recover from COVID-19, we'll maintain Manchester's vibrancy and make sure all our communities are included in the life of the city, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, faith, or socioeconomic background.***

***We want to lead by example when it comes to responding to climate change. So we aim to make Manchester a zero-carbon city by 2038 or before – at least 12 years earlier than the national 2050 target.***

Our Councillors are at the heart of making these things happen. Manchester City Council is committed to helping our Councillors ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their wide ranging and fast changing roles as effectively as possible. The knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of Manchester's Members is crucial as we strive to match our ambition with our capacity to deliver. The Council recognises that our Councillors need the right support to manage the many priorities of the modern Manchester Councillor.

This strategy seeks to set out a clear direction to help equip our Members with the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their roles and to enable the Council and our Members to make best use of time and resources. It covers how we identify development needs, the ways in which Members can participate in learning and development, and how we measure the success of the learning.

***This strategy has been reviewed by the Council's Standards Committee and approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer.*** It has been distributed to all Members and the Council's Strategic Management Team.

This strategy does not cover co-opted committee members. They will be provided with appropriate specialist training relevant to their roles.

## 2. Our Vision

Recent years have seen many changes in local government and the challenges they present require Members and officers to be responsive and flexible. The Council has worked with our residents, businesses and partners to adopt the Our Manchester Strategy to meet these challenges and deliver our ambitions together through the Our Manchester behaviours :

- We work together and trust each other
- We're proud and passionate about Manchester
- We take time to listen and understand
- We 'own it' and aren't afraid to try new things.

The Council's contribution to the Our Manchester vision is set out in the Corporate plan, setting the Council's priorities for the next 2 -3 years. One of the key priorities is to be a well-managed Council which includes to support our people to be the best and make the most of our resources.

To achieve this, we need to ensure that learning and development is appropriately focused, well delivered and that resources are used effectively to achieve maximum benefit.

Learning and development applies to all Councillors even those who have served on the Council for a long time as part of **continuing** development . The key to this Member Development Strategy is that all Councillors have a responsibility to their communities and the Council to continuously develop and to keep up to date with the challenges facing local government and to help ensure that the Our Manchester vision becomes a reality.

### 3 . Our Objectives

The key objectives are to :

- Ensure all Members are well equipped with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to enable them to fulfil their various roles effectively and to the best of their ability.
- Ensure that all our Members have equal access to training and development opportunities, providing extra resources to accommodate those with special requirements.
- Support a consistent approach to learning and development for Members
- Ensure that new Members are fully supported during induction and beyond to allow them to carry out their duties effectively as quickly as possible.
- Broaden knowledge around Council business, the Corporate plan, key strategies and areas of changing priorities.
- Encourage a supportive environment where Members help to develop their colleagues.
- Ensure that the learning and development of Members is recognised as crucial to the Council's success and to the success of the Our Manchester Strategy .
- Facilitate regular assessment of training needs and the learning and development programme by Members.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme and the Member Development strategy.
- Facilitate a planned and strategic approach to member development
- ***Ensure that member development is led jointly by members and officers.***
- Develop and deliver ( with Member involvement and engagement) an effective Member Learning and Development Programme.

## 4. Key Responsibilities

### **Monitoring Officer**

Overall responsibility for Member learning and development rests with the Monitoring Officer - the key to its success however is that it is owned by the Council as a whole .

### **Standards Committee**

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining Members ethical standards.

### **Lead Member for Training and Development**

***The lead member for training and development is the statutory deputy leader who works closely with the monitoring officer in ensuring that the training needs of all Councillors are met.*** To achieve this there needs to be a clear and consistent approach not only to identifying and delivering training but one which also provides opportunity for Members to have direct input into their own development.

***The Monitoring Officer, supported as required by the Lead Member for Training and Development, is responsible for the following key tasks:***

- Provide strategic direction to formulate, implement and evaluate Member development.
- annually review the 'Member Development Strategy'
- Promote development opportunities including sharing learning and best practice.
- To promote and encourage completion of a training needs assessment by Members, through their group officers (where appropriate) and to use the results as one of the tools for identifying and prioritising training needs.
- Support the work of the Standards Committee in promoting and maintaining ethical standards.
- Compile an annual training plan that reflects the priorities identified and with learning opportunities spread evenly throughout the year.

- Be responsive to and include emerging training needs into the plan as they arise ensuring training links with the Council's aims policies and objectives
- Strategically monitor the Member Development Budget ensuring that the training budget is being used effectively.
- Encourage provision of feedback by Members following any development activity.
- Consider a variety of options for delivering training and monitor their effectiveness, including formal training, e-learning and other online resources, members handbook, drop-in lunchtime sessions, marketplace events.
- Explore opportunities to promote learning and development on a GM/Regional level
- Support the delivery of a robust induction programme for new Members and promote buddying/mentoring within 'groups'

### **Group Officers**

Group Officers have a key role in supporting member learning and development within their Groups .This involvement is key in order to assess training needs and to facilitate buddying and mentoring arrangements, particularly for new Members. Group Officers also have a role to play in encouraging attendance at training and understanding the reasons for non-attendance as well as considering and supporting ways in which improvements can be made to participation in development and learning opportunities by Members in their Group .

### **Members**

The key roles of all Councillors are set out in Article 2 of the Council's constitution i.e. to :

- collectively be the ultimate policymakers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
- bring views of their communities into the Council's decision-making process;
- effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
- deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
- respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially;
- participate in the governance and management of the Council;

- be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
- maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.

It is essential that all Members have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil these roles. All Members are responsible for, and have direct input into, their own development. This can be achieved by highlighting their development needs, including participating in a needs assessment with their Group Officers. Members are also responsible for attending any mandatory training, participating in learning and development opportunities and providing meaningful feedback to ***the Monitoring Officer.***

Members will be expected to participate in learning and development in the following ways :

- New Members will attend and participate in the Induction Programme
- Members of Planning and Licensing Committees will attend training on Planning and Licensing decision making including refresher training
- Participating in training and attending training or briefings
- New Scrutiny Chairs will attend training on Scrutiny matters
- Supporting each other through mentoring and advice
- Sharing and cascading learning within groups
- Completing post training feedback forms .

## 5. The Programme - Identifying learning and development needs

For the purpose of this strategy, development can be divided into 3 broad categories

- Knowledge - including workings of the Council, policies, community strategy
- Skills - including negotiating/influencing skills, social media, IT
- Role Specific - relating to particular roles on committees/external bodies

The following training is mandatory:

- New member induction
- Planning and Highways (for committee members)
- Licensing (for committee members)

### Knowledge

#### New Members

All new Members will be required to attend the induction programme( discussed in further detail at section 6). They will also have opportunity to highlight any development needs and benefit from mentoring opportunities, through their Group Officers.

#### All Members

Chief Officers will engage with the **Monitoring Officer** to suggest and deliver learning and development relevant to all Members e.g. planning, welfare and benefits, budget etc All Members will be encouraged to participate in Council wide development such as the Our Manchester Experience.

***It is also expected that all members will undergo training in priority areas such as Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, Carbon Literacy and Cyber Security.***

### Skills

All Members will be encouraged to complete a training needs assessment through their Group Officers or ***for members not in a Group with an officer from HR***. The anonymised information collected will be fed back through Group Officers and used to highlight common skill needs. It will also inform and support the delivery of training which is focused and appropriate to these overall needs. Group Officers will also work with their members to help identify those willing to act as mentors and champions.



## Role Specific

Development needs in this area will be determined by the specific role held by individual Members. E.g.

- Members of the Licensing and Planning and Highways committees are required to attend mandatory in-house training.
- All newly appointed Scrutiny Chairs will receive in-house training on Governance and Decision making, the role of a scrutiny chair, scrutiny of a key decision and call in. They are also encouraged to attend a 2-day residential LGA course and attend the annual Centre for Public Scrutiny conference
- All members of Scrutiny Committees are to be offered scrutiny related training delivered by the LGA.
- Preparatory Civic Coaching is offered to Deputy Lord Mayors

Chief Officers will support the identification of development needs in relation to roles linked to a specific committee and ensure they are included as part of the development planning process.

## How can members make requests for development and training?

Members can apply for training through their Group Officers. The Monitoring Officer ***in consultation with the lead member for training and development*** will consider the request and, taking into account available budget, determine the most efficient means of delivery.

Scrutiny Chairs are encouraged to highlight any training needs for themselves or their committee to the Scrutiny lead officer.

## 6. Delivering training and development

### Annual training plan.

An annual training plan will be produced **by the Monitoring Officer** reflecting the needs identified above. This will ensure that development is provided in a structured way and spread throughout the year, making best use of Member/Officer time and resources. The training plan will be informed by needs identified by committees, and individual members' training needs assessments through their Group Officers. It will also consider the overall strategy, evaluation from the previous year and any changes in the law. Options for training and development for the forthcoming municipal year will be looked at in December/January and a proposed annual training plan will be drawn up taking into account that the plan needs to be responsive where new training needs emerge e.g. as a result of changes in legislation or policy. The proposed plan will be considered by the Monitoring Officer **in consultation with the lead member for training and development**, with the programme commencing in May.

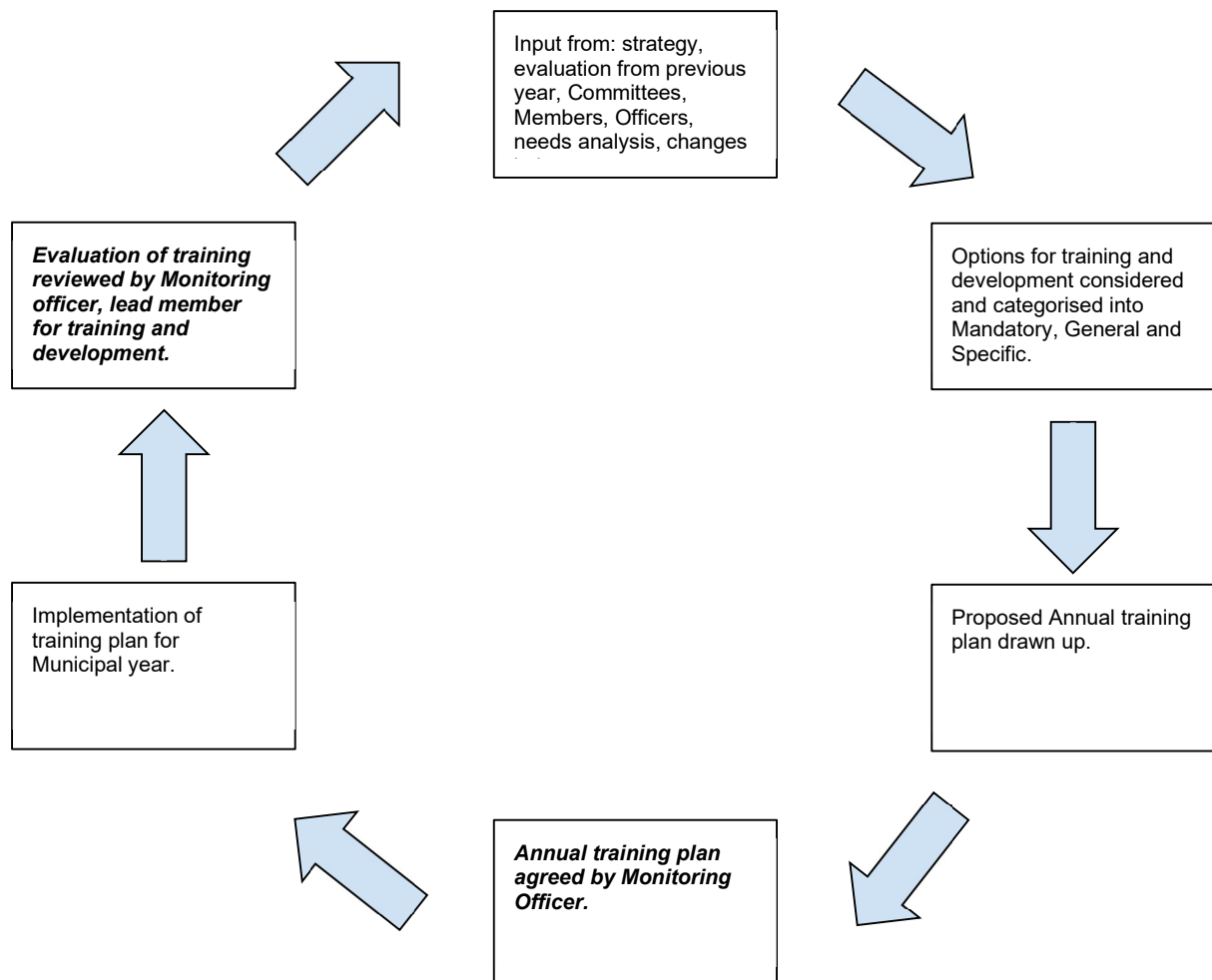
Training and development will be classified as follows

- Mandatory - Induction/required for a specific role
- General - recommended, to ensure all members are able to fulfil their roles including new or changing legislation or major policy or service changes including new ways of working e.g. the move to google and modern.gov.)
- Specific - promoted to further develop members' skills, knowledge in a particular area of interest.

(A list of current options for training and development opportunities is attached at Appendix A, categorised as above )

The diagram below sets out how the annual training 'cycle' will operate.

## Annual training cycle



The Monitoring Officer ***in consultation with the lead Member for training and Development*** will be responsible for reviewing and updating the content of the plan as new priorities arise and providing a steer on the prioritisation of training within the programme, taking into account any emerging themes or needs to be included. The training plan will be distributed to all Members who will be able to highlight any training gaps at the earliest opportunity.

### **Induction for New Councillors**

All newly elected Councillors will undergo an induction programme split over **3** sessions. Returning Councillors will be welcome to attend as a refresher.

Session 1 will primarily focus on legal and constitutional matters e.g.

- Code of conduct - setting out the rules that apply governing behaviour and registration and declaration of interests when acting in an official capacity
- Gifts and hospitality - guidance on acceptable and unacceptable gifts and hospitality and, where required, how to declare them.
- Data protection - highlighting members' responsibilities when handling personal information on behalf of the Council and as a ward representative.
- Freedom of information - Understanding how Freedom of Information requests apply to members when undertaking Council business.
- Member/Officer relations - highlights the importance of mutual respect and sets out the protocols about what support members can expect from officers given the need for Officers to remain fair and impartial.
- Use of Council resources - sets out the circumstances under which resources provided to Councillors can be legitimately used.
- Access to Information
- Social Media Guidance
- Governance and decision making - sets out the structure of the Council, the decision-making process and the role of scrutiny committees.
- Member DBS checks

Where possible this session will include a practical exercise undertaken in small groups .

Time is also made available for Group Induction.

This will be followed by a shorter afternoon programme dealing with more practical matters.

- Housekeeping information for members - a guided tour of members facilities, an introduction to members services, photographs and allocation of passes.
- ***An introduction to Member Development***
- ICT - Allocation and set up of equipment with ICT colleagues ***and identification of ICT related training needs and additional support.***

Sessions 2 ***and 3*** will cover key information

- Casework - How neighbourhood services are delivered, support available to members from neighbourhood officers, and an opportunity to hear from an experienced member about their experiences. ***Understanding Safeguarding issues***
- ***Member safety- practical advice for members on how to keep safe when carrying out their roles in the community.***
- ***Budget - a high level introduction to the Council's budget from sources of funding to the budget setting process***
- ***Key strategies - existing and planned strategies to deliver Our Manchester***

***Casework and Health and Safety Sessions will be scheduled as soon after Session 1 as possible.***

***It will also be expected that new Members undertake bespoke training in the following key areas as part of their on-going development***

- ***Equality and Diversity***
- ***Carbon Literacy***
- ***Cyber Security***

***and participate in Our Manchester and 'listening in action' Sessions***  
***The scheduling and content of the induction will be agreed by the monitoring officer in consultation with lead member for training and development***

Evaluation will be conducted to inform future training provision for new Councillors and subsequent induction programmes.

A more tailored version of the induction programme will be provided to new Members elected following a by-election.

Where possible, new Councillors will also be supported by a mentor/buddy as arranged by their political groups.

They will also be provided with a Members Handbook including key information about how the Council operates, the Executive and decision-making process,

directorate responsibilities and the role of officers, the constitution, Health and Safety for Councillors, claiming allowances and essential contacts.

It is recognised that the induction of new Members is an ongoing process and further training opportunities will be made available to support their specific development needs, as identified.

### **Learning and Development - Delivery methods**

There are a variety of ways in which members can learn and develop

- Formal training sessions
- Presentations at Committee or at Full Council
- drop-in sessions/marketplace events
- E-learning and online resources
- Bulletins/Written materials e.g. Members Update on Ethical Governance newsletter.
- Briefings
- Mentoring/Coaching/Buddying

To encourage member involvement and generate participation a flexible approach is crucial. It is recognised that Members may have preferences around delivery methods and that some subjects more easily lend themselves to a particular method.

The Council's e-learning portal offers access to over 200 courses from softer skills such as effective communication, challenging behaviours, handling difficult conversations to essential information such as Information Governance, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety. The benefits of e-learning are that it allows Members to study at a time and pace that suits them. The flexibility that e-learning provides might also address some of the issues around non-attendance at more formal training as well as allow resources to be focused elsewhere.

Wherever possible, member preferences will be taken into account and consideration will always be given to those who are unable to access a particular method adopted.

IT skills are increasingly important to Members, in order to fulfil their roles effectively. Training in this area will focus on ensuring Members have the skills to

- Use email to communicate with constituents, officers and other bodies
- ***Participate in virtual meetings***
- Access and use online documents
- Conduct electronic research
- Use apps such as Modern.gov

- Use an electronic case work case management system

Training in this area is often best provided on a 1:1 basis, or in small groups supporting Members to progress at their own pace.

All members will also have access to a **document repository** where they can find the Members' Handbook , Guidance such as the Code of Conduct and Social Media Guidance ,training information, slides and presentations, learning aids, workbooks and videos, useful information and documents. This will be accessible from any device.

### **How will Learning and Development opportunities be communicated to members?**

The rolling training programme will be shared with all members, so they are aware of planned training over the period. Members will be made aware of any changes to this programme by means of a bulletin.

All communications about training will be sent from a dedicated email account [member.development.group@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:member.development.group@manchester.gov.uk) to ensure they stand out as relating to training.

Individual training events will be promoted with an 'advert' setting out in advance, clear goals and objectives and highlighting the relevance to Members.

### **When will training be held?**

In-house sessions will be scheduled at times to suit Members and where possible Members will be given a choice of dates/times. Where training will take up a full day as much advance notice as possible will be given.

Consideration will also be given to drop-in sessions and lunchtime events on those days when Members would normally be attending the Town Hall on other business.

### **Who will deliver training?**

There will be a mix of in-house trainers, partners and external providers as appropriate. Where possible training will be delivered in partnership with other Local Authorities and organisations.

***HROD have established a framework of learning providers to ensure that there is a network of experienced practitioners that can respond to the Council's learning and development requirements.***

## 7. Feedback and Evaluation

### Feedback

All Councillors who attend development opportunities will be asked to complete an evaluation form or provide more detailed feedback as appropriate. This information will be collated and reviewed by **the Monitoring Officer** to ensure that training attended is relevant and also gauge its usefulness for others.

A short evaluation form (attached at Appendix B) has been created, that Members can easily complete at the end of a training session. The form will also be emailed out to all attendees for those unable to complete on the day and to offer a further opportunity to provide additional feedback or comments.

The information gathered above will allow review of both content and method of delivery and ensure that the key objectives above are being met.

### Attendance

Attendance will be monitored and reviewed in order to focus on issues around non-attendance. To maximise attendance, training opportunities will be well advertised and highlight the specific benefits to Councillors in relation to their role. Training records will be maintained recording expressions of interest, numbers enrolled and actual attendance.

All Members who have booked on to training will be sent a reminder email up to one week prior to the event. A read receipt will be attached to try and highlight any members who may not have seen the reminder.

Where places are not limited, email reminders of training events will also be sent out to all Councillors to encourage maximum attendance on the day.

Where Members do not attend training, they have been booked on, they will be contacted asking for the reason why they were unable to attend. The support of Group Officers will be sought to encourage attendance and to deal with non-attendance as appropriate.

Information gathered above will be used to explore, with Group Officers, the reasons for non-attendance, tackle emerging issues and consider appropriate mechanisms to increase attendance levels.



## **Evaluation**

To enable full evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach to member learning and development the following will be considered:

- Training evaluation forms completed by Members
- Other feedback received from Members
- Feedback received through Group officers resulting from completed needs assessments
- Annual Member survey will include a section on training
- Statistics on Member participation including attendance

## **8. Resources**

An annual budget of £28,567 has been allocated for member training and development in the financial year **2022/23**. In addition, there is a small budget which can be called upon to support scrutiny training.

Member Services will provide administrative support to the delivery of training.

## **9. Review of this Strategy**

This Strategy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier where there is a change in the applicable law or Council policy, affecting this strategy.

It will help ensure all Members are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to support their communities, the success of the Council and the Our Manchester strategy.

## **(Appendix A)**

### **Members Training and Development**

#### **Mandatory**

##### **Induction Programme**

All newly elected and returning members are required to attend an induction programme split over **3** sessions.

**Session 1** focuses on code of conduct, gifts and hospitality, data protection, freedom of information, member/officer relations, use of Council resources, governance and decision making.

This is followed by a tour of members facilities, introduction to member services, photographs and allocation of passes. ***Allocation and set up of equipment with ICT colleagues and identification of ICT related training needs and additional support.***

***Session 2 focuses on Casework and Member Safety and will be scheduled as soon after Session 1 as possible.***

***Session 3 focuses on Key Strategies and Budget***

***Recommended further training -***

- ***Equality and Diversity***
- ***Carbon Literacy***
- ***Cyber Security***

##### **Planning and Highways (for committee members)**

All newly appointed members to the Planning and Highways Committee are required to attend this training. A brief site visit followed by a training session to include basics of the planning system, the planning protocol (specifically members' interests, bias/predetermination and speaking at committee). Also, the types of matters typically brought to committee, the content/format of committee reports and material planning considerations.

##### **Licensing (for committee members)**

All newly appointed members to the Licensing Committee are required to attend this training. The training covers background legislation for Licensing Act decisions, Taxi decisions and Gambling. It also focused on principles of a fair hearing, procedure at hearings and examples of member's interests which need to be declared.

**General** - suitable for all , to ensure all members are able to fulfil their roles

**Code of Conduct incl Members Interests & Gifts & Hospitality**

The rules that apply governing behaviour and registration and declaration of interests when acting in an official capacity. Guidance on acceptable and unacceptable gifts and hospitality and, where required, how to declare them.

**Decision Making**

The structure of the Council, the decision-making process and the role of scrutiny committees.

**Data Protection/GDPR**

Members' responsibilities when handling personal information on behalf of the Council and as a ward representative.

**Member/Officer Relations**

The importance of mutual respect and sets out the protocols about what support members can expect from officers given the need for Officers to remain fair and impartial.

**Use of Resources**

The circumstances under which resources provided to Councillors can be legitimately used.

**Carbon Literacy**

Becoming Carbon Literate will give you the knowledge and skills to help drive a socially just and environmentally sustainable future. Learning alongside officers, you will gain an understanding of the basic science behind climate change, Social equity & climate change, What you can do to act on climate change, Strategies and skills for communicating action on climate change

**Our Manchester**

A guide to the Our Manchester vision. What an Our Manchester approach means and how it works in practice.

**Lord Mayor and GMCA Mayor**

An insight into the roles and the differences between them

**Council Protocol / Rules of Debate / What to expect at your first Council meeting**

A helpful guide to the rules governing debate and protocols associated with Council meetings.

**Equality and Diversity training**

***A bespoke package for Members on Inclusion, Anti-Racism & Implicit Bias training. This will include a pre-training assessment form which attendees will be required to complete***

**Personal Safety**

Practical advice for members on how to keep safe when carrying out their roles in the community.

**Social Media**

Aims to train councillors in how to craft and communicate effective messages to convey useful and essential information in order to build confidence among residents in the council's commitment and ability to make a positive contribution to the community's well-being and happiness.

**Budget/Finance**

MCC budget briefing delivered by the City Treasurer.

An explanation of Council Tax, Business Rates and Manchester Benefits Service delivered by the Corporate Revenues Manager

**Local Government Finance**

This workshop gives a very good grounding in how local government finance works in practice and sets the basics as part of the bigger picture of current developments and longer-term trends.

**IT skills**

***Appropriate training to support Members with their use of hardware and software.***

**Specific** - promoted to further develop members' skills, knowledge in a particular area of interest.

**Civic Coaching Programme**

The aim is to support the development of the Deputy Mayor to be highly effective in the key spheres in which the Mayoral office and 'First Citizen' operates.

**Scrutiny Chair**

The role of a scrutiny chair, scrutiny of a key decision and call in, governance and decision making.

**Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults**

What is safeguarding? Understanding the role of an elected member in relation to safeguarding compared to acting as a concerned member of the public. How to respond if someone is in crisis? What is the pathway for referring and what you should expect

**Audit Training**

*Recommended for all members of Audit Committee coordinated by the Head of Audit and Head of Commercial Governance*

**Directorship Training**

*Support Members to effectively fulfil their duties in a range of company board settings, covering areas such as governance, ethics and conflicts of interest.*

**Public Speaking**

To equip participants with the public speaking techniques that will help them overcome nerves, project their voice effectively to capture the attention of the audience.

**Media Skills**

To equip participants with techniques for dealing with the media: this will look at who the media are, structure of radio and interviews, what do the media want, types of story: their 'agenda', how and how not to answer the questions, and making the most of what you have to say.

**Speedreading**

This workshop is designed to double the reading speed of all participants to make them a more effective reader.

### **Dealing with Difficult Situations**

Helpful for those who have to deal constructively with challenging behaviours. It aims to help participants to understand the causes of conflict whilst providing the confidence and skills to resolve it.

### **Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience**

Covers an introduction to handling the media, understanding your role as a councillor during an emergency and provides practical advice and best practice.

### **Dementia Awareness**

A workshop that covers what it is like for someone to live with dementia, the signs and symptoms of dementia, how you can turn your understanding into action and help someone live well with dementia, the local situation and how you can help, services to signpost people to, and the effects a diagnosis can have for carers/support network.

### **Hate Crime Awareness**

This event will give you a chance to learn more about Manchester's Hate Crime Strategy, the difference between a hate crime and a hate incident and the remedies available, and how and where to report hate crime.

### **Corporate Property Access Database (CPAD)**

The Council's Property Asset Database (CPAD) is used to manage key elements of the Council's Operational and Investment property portfolios. The briefing will provide an overview of the system, the benefits of using it to search for data and ways to make contact regarding any issues and questions you may have regarding Council land and property.

### **Being an Effective Councillor: Making a difference - doing it your way**

As a new councillor finding your feet, how do you plan to make your mark? What are the different 'roles' that you as a councillor might focus on, to do the most for your community? This workshop explores the relevant roles and styles - facilitating community development; fixing resident issues; watching over council decision-making to help you maximise your impact.

### **Mental Health Awareness Session**

This half day course provides an overview of mental health problems, as well as practical tools to help you manage your own mental well-being and support for residents, friends, family and colleagues.

### **Suicide Prevention**

Facts, figures and myths about suicide prevalence, risk factors and warning signs. Understanding suicidal feelings and identifying those at risk.

Building confidence to talk to someone who may be suicidal.

Useful local and national resources to support people who may be suicidal, worried about someone or bereaved by suicide.

### **LGA Development Opportunities**

#### **Leadership Essentials in**

##### **Finance**

This workshop is held over two days and aims to help portfolio holders get to grips with the financial challenges facing their authority. The course discusses setting longer term strategies for sustainability as well as balancing the budget on an annual basis, and how to work with officers to ensure the Council is making the most of its opportunities.

##### **Children**

Aims to support Lead Members with the key challenges they face in the changing policy landscape and to develop leadership capacity, share learning and provide a valuable networking opportunity.

##### **Effective Scrutiny**

A two-day programme for new Scrutiny Chairs covering leading and managing a scrutiny review; chairing scrutiny meetings, increasing participation by Members and the public and ensuring impact of scrutiny recommendations.

##### **Health & Well-Being**

This two-day residential session gives Chairs an opportunity to come together to have space to think and reflect, share experiences and actively learn from each other.

##### **Adult Social Care**

Supports Lead Members with the key challenges they face in adult social care. It will focus on leadership in the current challenging policy and practice context, including implementing the Care Act, sector led improvement and integration.

##### **Women Councillors Weekend**

Provides an opportunity for women Councillors to network and share experiences with each other.

### **Young Councillors Weekend**

Designed to give Councillors aged 40 and under an opportunity to benefit from some focused leadership skills aimed at helping them make progress in their political career. Also allows them to build up a network of other young councillors from different political parties and Local Authorities.

### **BAME**

Provides a unique learning and networking opportunity for Councillors from BAME backgrounds and those who are interested in exploring ideas for enhancing the recruitment and retention of BAME Councillors.

### **Working with the Media (Political Masterclass)**

A course run by experienced journalists who will provide advice and guidance on understanding journalists, the local media and what makes news; how to prepare for an interview; how to develop meaningful messages and narrative and how to convey your message and control an interview.

### **Leadership Academy**

This is aimed at Councillors in leadership positions and is spread over three modules. (1) leading through relationships (2) leading innovation and change (3) leading communities and place.



(Appendix B)

**Evaluation of Training****Your Name****Course Title / Date**

Please complete this form at the end of your session. The information provided will be used by the MDWG to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and help us make informed decisions about provision in the future.

**Was the timing of the training convenient for you?****YES/NO**

If you have answered NO please tell us why

**Did the training fully meet the aims and objectives?****YES/NO**

If you have answered NO please tell us why

**Would you recommend this training to others?****YES/NO**

If you have answered NO please tell us why

**Were you satisfied with the quality of handouts/slides?****YES/NO**

If you have answered NO please tell us why

**Overall, how satisfied were you with this training session? Please circle below:****Not very****1****2****3****4****5****Very much****Please provide any other comments or feedback below?**



Appendix B – 1 February 2021 to January 2022

Event	Category	Provider	Date/Time	Expected/ Actual Attendance	External Cost/ Officer Time
Living Streets National Walking Summit	Specific	NSA Policy Review	17 March 2021	1/1	£96.00
Transforming Digital Call Centres	Specific	Westminster Insight	31 March 2021	1/1	£351.00
The Future of British High Streets: Supporting the Recovery from Covid-19	Specific	Government Events	5 April 2021	1/1	£289.00
Newly Elected Members Induction Session 1	Mandatory	Internal	11 May 2021	10/10	7 hours
Newly Elected Members Induction Session 2	Mandatory	Internal	19 May 2021	10/10	2 hours
Newly Elected Members Induction Session 3	Mandatory	Internal	2 June 2021	10/10	2 hours
Planning & Highways Committee Training for new Committee Members	Mandatory	Internal	3 June 2021	13/13	6.5 hours
Licensing Policy Committees Training for new Committee Members	Mandatory	Internal	3 June 2021/ repeated 18 June 2021	4/4	2 hours
Improving Health Outcomes in Marginalised Communities	Specific	Government Events	8 June 2021	1/1	£330.65
Tackling Obesity	Specific	Public Policy Exchange	6 July 2021	1/1	No charge
Caseworker Training	Specific	Elected Technologies	17-18 June 2021	9/7	1 hour
CRM Training and Demo	Specific	Internal	28 June 2021	3/3	1.5 hours
Civil Contingencies	Specific	Internal	Sept/Oct 2021	14/11	7 hours
Induction to newly elected Chorlton Councillor	Mandatory	Internal	23/26 November 2021	1/1	4 hours
Safeguarding session for Exec Members	Specific	Internal	29 November 2021	8/4	3.5 hours
Audit Committee training	Specific	Internal	14 December 2021	5/4	2 hours

---

## **Summary figures**

### **Budget**

**Annual Training Budget = £28,567**  
**Total spend in this period = £ 1146.65**  
**(1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022)**

**At the time of writing this report a further £6602.00 currently committed until the end of the financial year.**

### **Attendance**

**Attendance at non mandatory training events compared to number of bookings = 77%**

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – 17 March 2022

**Subject:** Social Media Guidance for Members update

**Report of:** City Solicitor

---

**Summary**

To update the Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') as well as the provision of training for members on the Guidance.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee note the report.

---

**Wards Affected:** All

---

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Fiona Ledden  
Position: City Solicitor  
Telephone: 0161 234 3087  
Email: fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Poornima Karkera  
Position: Head of Governance Legal Services.  
Telephone: 0161 234 3719  
E-mail: poornima.karkera@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee last received a report on the operation and efficacy of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') at its meeting in March 2021. As requested by the Standards Committee at that meeting the Social Media Guidance for Members was circulated to all Members prior to the local Elections in 2021. In respect of sharing the Council's Social Media Guidance for Members with candidates, it has been confirmed that the Returning Officer (the separate statutory office holder responsible for the delivery of elections and independent from the Council) does not provide guidance to candidates on campaigning matters or on conduct should candidates be elected. Guidance on campaigning matters is provided by the Electoral Commission and shared with candidates and agents by the Returning Officer's staff. In the circumstances inclusion of the Council's Social Media Guidance for Members in the candidates' briefing pack was not considered appropriate. Social Media Guidance is, as members will be aware, covered in the first Induction Session with new members and new members are given a copy of the Social Media Guidance following Induction.
- 1.2 On review in 2021 it was not considered that further revision of the Guidance was required. A copy of the Guidance is contained in the Appendix to this report. It is not considered that further amendments other than remove the reference to the Email and Internet policies on the last page of the guidance now shown as [...] because these have been replaced by new Digital Media Policy which only relates to officers and to refresh the review date are required to the Guidance at this stage.

## **2.0 Operation of the Guidance**

- 2.1 In terms of the operation of the Guidance there were 12 complaints relating to Manchester City Councillors between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022. None of these complaints related to Social Media use .
- 2.2 In the circumstances use of social media by Members is not presently considered to be of particular current concern. However as this is an area where care is needed a further copy of the Social Media Guidance will be sent to all Members again shortly.

## **3.0 Training**

- 3.1 As highlighted in the report on member training elsewhere on the Agenda Training on Social Media is intended to form part of the Training Programme for 2022.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

That the Committee note the report.

## **Social Media guidance for Members**

### **1. Purpose**

This guidance is provided to assist Members when using social media. Members are bound by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members when using social media to conduct council business or to represent the Council and should be aware that they may be open to allegations that their actions have breached the code if giving the impression when using social media that they are acting in an official capacity. Where Members are using any "council resources" in order to access social media, they must also comply with the Use of Council Resources Guidance for Members which can be found in the Council's Constitution. This guidance assumes that most use of social media by Members will not involve the use of "council resources".

### **2. What is social media?**

The term 'social media' is used to describe websites and applications for social networking, where people create, share and exchange content and ideas in virtual networks and communities. The content shared may include (but is not limited to) personal information, opinions, research, commentary, video, pictures, or business information.

For the purposes of this guidance, the term applies, but is not limited to: blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, Snapchat, Instagram, discussion forums, special interest forums, user communities and any other personal web space where content is created, manipulated and shared. There are many more examples of social media and this guidance is relevant in relation to any social media a Member may use.

Social media is an incredibly useful tool for Members; it can increase engagement reaching a wider audience; enabling active and potentially instantaneous conversations with your communities. It can also support increased participation, stimulating debate about services, campaigns and local issues and often at a fraction of the cost of many traditional means of communication.

This guidance is intended to assist Members on how to use social media responsibly and effectively. It also indicates how risks and pitfalls may be minimised and managed.

### **3. Guidelines for using social media**

#### **3.1 The Members Code of Conduct and "Blurred identities"**

It is important for Members to be aware of the fact that they may have "blurred identities" online. This means that you may have a social media account where you comment both as a Member and as an individual. For example, a Facebook account where you post about a great night out (personal) and another time explain the Council's position on recycling (Member). While it may be clear to you when you are posting in your private capacity or as a Member, this may be less clear to

others. Such “blurred identities” may have implications where your views are taken as those of the Council or your political party, rather than your own personal opinion. It is therefore important for you to make sure that your social media accounts and profiles are as clear as possible as to whether you are speaking in your private capacity, as a Member of the Council, or as a member of your political party.

How you use your online identity will also determine how online content will be treated in respect of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members. The key to whether your online activity is subject to the Code of Conduct is whether you are giving the impression that you are acting as a Member of the Council.

This may be less than clear if you have a private blog or a Facebook profile and it is generally safest to assume that any online activity can be linked to your official role. (Unless you have gone to significant effort to keep an online persona completely separate from your Member identity, you are unlikely to be able to claim that you were acting in a completely private capacity).

Where you have a private blog or Facebook account that identifies you as a Member of the Council, you should state that the views expressed are your own and may not represent the views of the Council. Do not use the Council’s logo, or any other council-related emblems on a personal account or website.

Where you are held to be acting as a Member of the Council, the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members will apply to your online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication you undertake. Members should therefore comply with the general principles of the Code of Conduct in what they publish and in what they allow others to publish.

You will need to be particularly aware of the following sections of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members:

- *You must not:*
  - (a) *do anything which may knowingly cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010;*
  - (b) *bully or be abusive to any person;*
- *You must not:*
  - (a) *disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature*
- *You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.*

### **3.2 Think before you publish**

Social media sites are in the public domain and it is important to ensure you are confident of the nature of the information you publish. Once published, content is almost impossible to control and may be manipulated without your consent, used in



different contexts, or further distributed. Be aware of your own safety when placing information on the internet and do not publish information which could leave you or others vulnerable. This is in all social media posts or groups that you may be a member of, not just those in your own accounts.

Be aware that historical social media posts made prior to taking office, or being 'tagged' into certain posts/content may potentially give rise to complaints. Where possible, you should take steps to review such posts and remove/'un-tag' controversial content from your social media page.

### **3.3 Choose appropriate privacy settings**

Make use of stringent privacy settings if you don't want your social media to be accessed by the press or public. Read the terms of service of any social media site accessed and make sure you understand their confidentiality/privacy settings. Be careful about accepting people as 'friends' on social media sites, as this allows greater access to your personal social media content/information.

### **3.4 Make your commenting policy clear**

You will need to take note of the comments that other people make on your site, as if you allow offensive comments to stand on your site it can upset members of your community and may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. For blogs the easiest way to handle this is to moderate comments and to state clearly on your site that you are doing so and reasons why comments may be rejected. For Facebook or other social media networks, including multi-media sites like YouTube and Flickr where people can post public or semi-public messages to your profile, you will need to regularly check on your messages.

## **4. Principles for using social media**

The following five "guiding principles" offer assistance on how to approach any social media activities:

### **Be respectful**

Set the tone for online conversations by being polite, open and respectful. Use familiar language and be honest and professional at all times. Make sure that you respect other people's confidentiality – do not disclose non-public information or the personal information of others.

### **Be credible and consistent**

Be accurate, fair and transparent. Encourage constructive criticism and debate. Make sure that what you say online is consistent with your other communications.

### **Be honest about who you are**

It's important that any accounts or profiles that you set up are clear about your own personal role (see the advice on "blurred identities" above).

### **Be responsive**

Respond to questions and comments in an appropriate timely manner.

**Be confident**

Don't be scared of participating. Seek further guidance from the Council's Members'

Services or the Council's Central Communications Team if you need it. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, pause to think about it. Feel confident in what you say before you say it – and say it as clearly as you can.

**5. Responsibilities of Members**

In general, Members have the same legal duties online as anyone else. There are some additional duties around Members' use of their websites for electoral campaigning and extra care needs to be taken if Members are writing on planning, licensing and quasi-judicial matters.

**5.1 Libel**

Members are personally responsible for the content they publish on any form of social media. Publishing, or allowing to be published an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation may incur a libel action. A successful libel claim against you may result in an award of damages against you.

**5.2 Copyright**

Placing images or text on your site from a copyrighted source (for example extracts from publications or photos) without permission is likely to breach copyright. Avoid publishing anything you are unsure about, or seek permission in advance. Breach of copyright may result in an award of damages against you.

**5.3 Data Protection Legislation**

Avoid publishing the personal data of individuals unless you have their express written permission.

**5.4 Confidential Information**

Do not publish or report on meetings which are private or internal (where no members of the public are present or the meeting is of a confidential nature). Do not publish or report on "Part 2 reports" (which contain confidential information or exempt information as defined in the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules at Part 4, Section B of the Council's Constitution).

**5.5 Bias and pre-determination**

If you are involved in determining planning or licensing applications or other quasi-judicial decisions, avoid publishing anything on your blog that might suggest you don't have an open mind about a matter you may be involved in determining. If not, the decision runs the risk of being invalidated.

## **5.6 Electoral periods**

The Electoral Commission requires that candidates provide a return of expenditure on any form of advertising or campaign literature and that includes web advertising. And there are additional standards for materials which can be downloaded from a website. Full guidance for candidates is published on the Electoral Commission's website.

## **6. Malware and online crime prevention**

Social media can be used by the online criminal community to deliver malware and carry out schemes designed to damage property or steal confidential information. To minimise risk related to such threats, adhere to the following guidelines. While these guidelines help to reduce risk, they do not cover all possible threats and are not a substitute for good judgment.

- Do not use the same passwords for social media that you use to access Council computing resources.
- Do not follow links or download software on social media pages posted by individuals or organisations that you do not know.
- If any content you find on any social media web page looks suspicious in any way, close your browser and do not return to that page.
- Configure social media accounts to encrypt sessions whenever possible. Facebook, Twitter and others support encryption as an option. This is extremely important for roaming users who connect via public Wi-Fi networks.

## **7. Use of social media and smart devices during meetings and events**

Increasingly hand held devices, such as smartphones or tablet devices like ipads are used to access social media during internal and external Council meetings and events to share information, views or comment.

Devices need to be used with care and in line with the above guidance for social media accounts. Alongside this, Members are asked to ensure that devices are silent during meetings and are used without disturbing others.

## **8. Compliance**

The guidance in this document is in addition to the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, and Use of Council Resources Guidance for Members (adopted as Part 6, Section A and Section C of the Council's Constitution [ .. ]

It should be noted that any breach of this guidance may also constitute a breach of the Member Code of Conduct

## **9. Review**

These arrangements were last reviewed in 2021 and shall be reviewed **every year** thereafter, or earlier where there is a change in the applicable law or circumstances warrant an earlier review.

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – 17 March 2022

**Subject:** Work Programme for the Standards Committee

**Report of:** Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

---

**Summary**

To allow the Committee to consider and revise its work programme for future meetings.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to discuss the work programme and agree any changes.

---

**Wards Affected:** All

---

**Financial Consequences for Revenue Budget - None**

**Financial Consequences for the Capital Budget - None**

---

**Contact Officers:**

Fiona Ledden - City Solicitor  
0161 234 3087  
fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Andrew Woods - Governance Team Leader  
0161 234 3011  
andrew.woods@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection): None**

This page is intentionally left blank

## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

### To Meeting – 17 March 2022

Annual Standards Report	To note and review the work done in the last year to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members.	Poornima Karkera/ Peter Hasset	
Standing item, if needed - Members Update on Ethical Governance	To update Members on any national issues regarding ethical governance which may impact on the Council's arrangements for ethical governance.	Poornima Karkera	
Social Media Guidance for Members	To consider any updates/ revisions to the guidance and the efficacy of the guidance.	Poornima Karkera	
Member Training	To update Standards Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Member Development Strategy; report on training delivered in the current municipal year and update on the proposals in relation to the next municipal year.	Jonathan Kershner	
Standing item - Work Programme	To review and amend (if necessary) items to be considered at future meetings of the Committee.	Andrew Woods	

### Meeting – 16 June 2022

Code of Corporate Governance	TBC		
Annual Governance Statement	TBC		
Dispensations	To review the operation and efficacy of the process for granting dispensations.	Poornima Karkera	
Planning Protocol	To review the operation and efficacy of the Protocol.	Robert Irvine / Julie Roscoe	
Gifts and Hospitality	To review the operation and efficacy of the	Poornima Karkera	

## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

Guidance for Members	Guidance.		
The Member/ Officer Relations Protocol	To review the operation and efficacy of the Protocol.	Poornima Karkera	
The Use of Council Resources Guidance for Members	To review the operation and efficacy of the Guidance.	Poornima Karkera	
Members Code of Conduct – partnership arrangements	Report outlining how the requirements of the Council’s Member Code of Conduct is incorporated into the overall governance arrangements of organisations that the City Council has entered into Partnership Arrangements with, to demonstrate adequate assurance is in place.	Sarah Narici	
Standing item, if needed - Members Update on Ethical Governance	To update Members on any national issues regarding ethical governance which may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical governance.	Poornima Karkera	
Arrangements for Investigating Complaints made under the Members’ Code of Conduct	To review of the operation and efficacy of the Arrangements and Hearing Procedure.	Poornima Karkera	
Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members	To update the Committee on the discussions of the Greater Manchester Chief Legal Officers in the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members and the arrangements for dealing with complaints regarding breaches of the Code	Poornima Karkera	To remain on the WP until the Govt’s response is available
Standing item - Work Programme	To review and amend (if necessary) items to be considered at future meetings of the Committee.	Andrew Woods	



## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

**3 November 2022**

Standing item, if needed - Members Update on Ethical Governance	To update Members on any national issues regarding ethical governance which may impact on the Council's arrangements for ethical governance.	Poornima Karkera	
Register of Members Interests	To consider the operation of the Register of Members' Interests.	Poornima Karkera	

**16 March 2023**

Annual Standards Report	To note and review the work done in the last year to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members.	Poornima Karkera/ Peter Hasset	
Standing item, if needed - Members Update on Ethical Governance	To update Members on any national issues regarding ethical governance which may impact on the Council's arrangements for ethical governance.	Poornima Karkera	
Member Training	To update Standards Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Member Development Strategy; report on training delivered in the current municipal year and update on the proposals in	Jonathan Kershner	

## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

	relation to the next municipal year.		
Members Code of Conduct – partnership arrangements	Report outlining how the requirements of the Council's Member Code of Conduct is incorporated into the overall governance arrangements of organisations that the City Council has entered into Partnership Arrangements with, to demonstrate adequate assurance is in place.	Sarah Narici	
Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members	To update the Committee on the discussions of the Greater Manchester Chief Legal Officers in the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members and the arrangements for dealing with complaints regarding breaches of the Code	Poornima Karkera	To remain on the WP until the Govt's response is available
Standing item - Work Programme	To review and amend (if necessary) items to be considered at future meetings of the Committee.	Andrew Woods	

Unscheduled Items	
Consultation outcome on Updating Disqualification Criteria for Local Authority Members	Committee notes the report and requests that a report be brought to a future meeting once the legislation has been introduced.

## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

Code of Corporate Governance	TBC
Partnership arrangements	Report outlining the position regarding incorporating the Council's Member Code of Conduct into the overall governance arrangements of organisations that the City Council has entered into Partnership Arrangements with.
Annual Governance Statement	An additional ordinary meeting of the Standards Committee be arranged, in consultation with the Chair, to consider the AGS, to complement the submission of the AGS to the Audit Committee. (17 June 2021)
Review of the Operation and Efficacy of the Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against Members	The Chief Legal Officers in Greater Manchester be requested to discuss their respective Arrangements and that the outcome of these discussions be reported to a future meeting of this Committee. (17 June 2021)

### Documents/Procedures/Protocols – within the remit of the Committee

Document/Procedure/Protocol	Last Reviewed	Date Due for Review	Comments
The Code of Corporate Governance	March 2019	Date to be arranged as required	Standards Committee to retain responsibility of CCG (June 2021)
The Annual Governance Statement	June 2021	Date to be arranged as required	Standards Committee to retain responsibility of AGS (June 2021)
Members' Code of Conduct	Updated annually as needed as part of annual review of constitution.		AGMA wide review
Arrangements for Investigating Complaints made under the Members' Code of Conduct	June 2021	<b>June 2022</b>	
Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members	By Full Council February 2021	2022 or earlier where there is a change in the	Reviewed annually as part of the Council's

## Standards Committee Work Programme – 17 March 2022

	By Standards Committee March 2019	law or circumstances warrant an earlier review	Constitution
The Member/ Officer Relations Protocol	February 2021 By Standards Committee March 2019	2022 or earlier where there is a change in the law or circumstances warrant an earlier review	Reviewed annually as part of the Council's Constitution
The Use of Council Resources Guidance for Members	By Full Council February 2021 By Standards Committee June 2021	2022 or earlier where there is a change in the law or circumstances warrant an earlier review	Reviewed annually as part of the Council's Constitution
Social Media Guidance for Members	March 2021 By Standards Committee March 2019	March 2023 or earlier where there is a change in the law or circumstances warrant an earlier review.	
The Planning Protocol for Members	June 2019	November 2021	Reviewed annually as part of the Council's Constitution
Member Development Strategy	March 2021	March 2022	
Procedure for the Local Hearing of Allegations of Misconduct by Members of the Council	June 2021		
Register of Members Interests	Considered as part of annual report. March 2021	March 2022	