

**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.
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Wards Affected All

Financial Consequences – Revenue None

Financial Consequences – Capital None

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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.