

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Standards Committee – 14 March 2024

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 2023.

Recommendations

That the committee

- i) note the report on training delivered since February 2023.
 - ii) Approve the proposed changes to the Member Development Strategy.
 - iii) Support the proposed changes to the New Member Induction.
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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 – 16 March 2023 – Member Development Strategy

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Standards Committee last received a report on Member training and development in March 2023. The purpose of this report is to present a detailed report on all training delivered since the last report.

2.0 Member Development Strategy

- 2.1 The Member Development Strategy 2022 – 24 was approved by Standards Committee at its meeting of 17 March 2022.

- 2.2 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
- Develop and deliver (with Member involvement and engagement) an effective Member Learning and Development Programme.

- 2.3 The Member Development Strategy was fully reviewed in 2022 and subsequently approved by Standards Committee in March 2022. The Strategy was updated in 2023 to reflect the fact that responsibility for Member Development moved from the Statutory Deputy Leader's portfolio to the Deputy Leader's portfolio. There have been some minor updates to the Strategy and the training list in the Strategy. A copy of the updated Strategy 2022-24 can be found at Appendix A with changes marked in bold. The Strategy provides for a review every 2 years or earlier where there is a change in the applicable law or Council Policy affecting the Strategy. The Member Development Strategy will be fully reviewed by officers later in 2024

and submitted to Standards Committee for consideration in March 2025.

3.0 New Member Induction 2023

- 3.1 The New Member Induction programme 2023 was split into 3 sessions. The first session took place in the first week after the election and 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, an introduction to member development, general housekeeping and the allocation of devices by ICT.
- 3.2 Session 2 was an afternoon session, later that same week. This session covered Member Safety and the role of Neighbourhood teams/Member casework. The casework session was delivered by an experienced Councillor.
- 3.3 Session 3 (the following week) was an afternoon session following full Council and covered Key Strategies and Budget.
- 3.4 There was 100% attendance at Session 1 and 6 out of 7 Councillors attended sessions 2 and 3. 1 Councillor was unable to attend these sessions due to prior commitments. Alternative sessions were arranged for them, which they attended. 1 returning Councillor attended all 3 sessions. Following the final session an electronic feedback form was sent out.
- 3.5 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. Also provided was a key contacts list of officers across the Council broken down by service area, the Council's Constitution, Social Media Guidance for Members, the Council's Member /Officer Protocol and the latest edition of the Member's Ethical Guidance.
- 3.6 All slides from the 3 sessions were shared with the new members.
- 3.7 New members were also given opportunity to attend a complementary new member induction programme run by North-West Employers. 2 New members attended a module.
- 3.8 There was also a focused induction for a Councillor elected in September 2023. This new member will be invited to attend the full induction in 2024.

4.0 Induction Feedback from May 2023

- 4.1 A feedback evaluation form was sent out and 4 out of 7 of the newly elected Members submitted a response.
- 4.2 The overall satisfaction rating for the programme averaged 4.5 out of 5 (marginally down from 4.7 in 2022). When asked about the relevance of the programme to their role the average rating was 4.75 out of 5 (marginally down from 4.8 in 2022).
- 4.3 Session1 (morning) - Average Rating 4.5 out of 5 (up from 4.3 in 2022), with 2 of the Councillors rating it as 5 out of 5. Comments – ‘the most informative session’, one suggested a different format of delivery e.g. e-learning.
- 4.4 Session 1 (afternoon) - Average Rating 4.75 out of 5 (up from 4.5 in 2022). 3 Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. Comments included ‘The ICT equipment, support and session were first class. I am very impressed of how well run the session was and the quality of the ICT equipment received.’
- 4.5 Session 2 – Average Rating 4.25 out 5 (marginally down from 4.3 in 2022)). 2 Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. Comments - ‘very informative and useful’, ‘would have preferred to meet Neighbourhood team directly’, ‘would have liked a dedicated session on casework’.
- 4.6 Session 3 – Average Rating 4.5 out of 5 (no change from 2022). 2 Councillors rated it 5 out of 5. Comments – ‘A very helpful session, really informative ..maybe needs a longer time slot.’
- 4.7 The ratings above are largely consistent with those from 2022. As regards the feedback from Session 2 these have been considered and a new approach reflected in the proposals for 2024 at 4.2 below.

5.0 Proposals for New Member Induction 2023

- 5.1 The feedback from 2023 was positive but in relation to the comments received around Session 2 some changes to the programme are recommended. These have been discussed with and supported by the Lead Member for Member Training and Development.
- 5.2 In relation to Session 2 it is proposed to extend this session and include a much broader presentation from the Neighbourhoods directorate as much of the Members’ casework enquiries will relate to this area. The session will now include an overview of the Neighbourhoods Directorate, Neighbourhood Teams, Waste Recycling and Street Cleansing, Compliance and Enforcement and Highways. There will also be a presentation on complaints and members enquiries. It is intended that this Session will still take place during the first week of the induction to reflect the importance to new members of this presentation.
- 5.3 It is also proposed that new members be required to complete their cyber security e-learning whilst in the Town Hall Extension as part of Session 1, in the afternoon. ICT colleagues will be on hand to support this. The session will

be extended to allow for this.

- 5.4 Equality and Inclusion 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 invited to attend the Our Manchester experience and Listening in Action events.

6.0 Member training February 2022 – January 2023

- 6.1 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.

- 6.2 In addition to the training highlighted in Appendix B, E-learning continues to be available on Health and Safety and a wide variety of courses on softer skills such as effective communication, handling difficult situations etc. As the committee will be aware Ethical Guidance Newsletters are also circulated to members. There has been a continued focus on encouraging members to complete key training priorities; Carbon Literacy, Equalities and Cyber Security.
- 6.3 In relation to Carbon Literacy, 91 members have now attended the training. Dedicated drop-in sessions are being planned to support members who still need to complete their action forms.
- 6.4 In relation to Equalities training, 76 members have now attended relevant training, with 3 sessions offered to members in 2023.
- 6.5 As at the date of preparation of this report 88 members have now completed the Cyber Security e-learning module which has been designed specifically for members. The City Solicitor closely monitors completion rates and continues to highlight the importance of this training to the small minority of members who are yet to complete it. Where requested, individual support has been provided to members to enable them to access this training.
- 6.6 A bespoke Wellbeing and Self Care session was held in June 2023 which 12 members attended. The feedback from this session was overwhelmingly positive and included comments such as – ‘Insightful’, ‘very helpful to deal with time and stress’, ‘sensitive to our roles’, ‘made me think about how to help others’. It is proposed that similar sessions will be offered in the future.
- 6.7 Members were also given the opportunity to attend LGA webinars on Personal Safety which ran during 2023. There was also a mock Council

session held for the new Lord Mayor covering a variety of scenarios they could face when managing a Council meeting.

7.0 Attendance

- 7.1 Attendance levels at non-mandatory training events compared to the number who booked on, remained relatively high at 80%. A small decrease on the 83% previously reported for 22/23.
- 7.2 In line with the Member Development Strategy, email reminders were sent to members prior to training events. Where possible training is provided in afternoon/early evening sessions to suit member preferences and encourage attendance.
- 7.3 Where there has been non-appearance by members for training which they were expected to attend, they have been contacted in order to understand the reasons for non-attendance. The most common reasons were 'diary clashes' and 'other meeting over ran'. To support members in virtual training sessions staff from Members Services attend where possible to troubleshoot issues members have when joining the training.
- 7.4 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.

8.0 Evaluation of training

- 8.1 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 received from both internal and external training shows 93% felt that the training had met the aims and objectives and would recommend the training to others.

9.0 Scheduled training for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year

- 9.1 CPAD (Council's Property Asset Database) training is scheduled for February 2024 and training on Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness and Mental Health training are also being considered.

10.0 Training Programme - May 2024 - April 2025

- 10.1 Work is now taking place to produce a training programme for the 2024/25 municipal year. The programme will be considered by the Monitoring Officer and lead member for Member Training and Development before being circulated to members and Chief Officers.
- 10.2 The mix of training will reflect the mandatory, general and specific categories as referred to in paragraph 5.1 above. The programme is likely to include further sessions on Gendered Intelligence and Equalities and topics such as Corporate Parenting, HIV awareness Public Speaking and speech writing and Three Ways to Save a Life.

11.0 Budget

- 11.1 Spend against the annual budget is referenced in Appendix B.

12.0 Recommendation

The Recommendations are set out at the front of the report .