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Co-operative Council

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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Governance Committee

Wednesday 10 April 2024

6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Third Floor,
Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Democratic Services: Lorna Gordon / Millie Wallace 01952 384978 / 381542

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Committee Members: Councillors H Rhodes (Chair), I Preece (Vice-Chair), P Davis, A D McClements, S A W Reynolds, W L Tomlinson and R Tyrrell

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3.0	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	3 - 6
	To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 17, January 2024.	
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	To receive an update report on the Member Learning & Development Programme 2023 – 2027.	
5.0	Member Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Training	Verbal Report
	To receive an overview of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	

Training and to consider whether the Council's EDI module should be recommended learning for Councillors.

6.0 Constitution Update

Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update on the Council's Constitution.

7.0 Registers of Interest Update

Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update on the registers of interests for Borough, Town and Parish Councils.

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GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Wednesday
17 January 2024 at 6.00 pm in E201, Telford College, Haybridge Road,
Wellington, Telford, TF1 2NP**

Present: Councillors H Rhodes (Chair), P Davis and
W L Tomlinson

In Attendance: R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal &
Democracy), A Plummer (Democracy Team Leader) and
S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny))

Apologies: Councillor A D McClements, S A W Reynolds and
R Tyrrell

GOV14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Angela McClements, Shirley Reynolds and Rachael Tyrrell.

GOV15 Declarations of Interest

None.

GOV16 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

GOV17 Member Development Update

The Democracy Manager provided a Member Development Update. The report provided to Members an outline of the learning and development programme for elected Members following the May 2023 elections. The programme was split into four main themes; Hit the ground running, Operating as an effective councillor, Roles and responsibilities, and Continued professional development. Members were informed that the programme was halfway through, with majority of Members completed two out of the four themes.

Overall feedback on the training were largely positive with Members feeling confident in the presenters and for the slides to be accessible after the event on the Councillor Connect Portal.



Feedback was mixed in regards to preferred delivery methods e.g. in-person or virtual. The Member Support Team will continue to schedule both in person and virtual training to meet different needs along with recap or follow-up sessions to capture those Members that missed the initial training.

The next stage of the Member Development Programme was said to be the continued professional development plan. This was said to include the personal development plan with a Members Named Support Officer, where a Member would be able to develop a plan of development based on their needs. At the time of the meeting it was said that 10 elected Members had indicated their interest and that the team were in the process of starting the development plan with them to support in any learning gaps.

Members were informed that the Member Support Team were currently working towards the LGA Member Development Charter. Members were informed that a portfolio was being collated as evidence for the charter. There were two levels that could be achieved; the charter and the charter plus. Officers were currently working on achieving the Charter status for the development programme and hoped to eventually have the Charter Plus status. As the work develops it would be fed back to the Governance Committee for knowledge and comment.

Members commented on the variety of training sessions available and thanked officers for their support. Members raised a number of points of further developments and incentives such as 'scorecards' to monitor the progress of Members.

By majority the Members agreed the recommendations as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED – that Governance Committee:

1) The Committee noted the contents of the report; and

2) The approach set out within the report for the Council to attain the Local Government Association's Member Development Charter and Charter Plus, to be endorsed by the Committee.

GOV18 Annual Report on the Committee for Standards in Public Life

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy presented the Annual Report on the Committee for Standards in Public Life to the Committee. Members were informed that a similar report was presented last year and that it would be an annual update to this committee each year. The Committee for Standards in Public Life were empowered by the Government to have power of recommendation to outline the ethical standards that elected Members and



co-opted Members had in their role to represent the public. The report outlined the work from the Committee such as the work conducted on ethical standards, work in public life and the impact of Artificial Intelligence from elected Members. Members were informed that the report was for noting.

GOV19 National Standards Cases Update

The Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy informed Members on the National Standards Case update. There were two examples given to Members. These included an update of an elected Councillor in Woking Borough Council who broke their code of conduct which resulted in further training and a written apology being issued. The other case discussed was where an elected Councillor had put offensive content on social media. Each of these cases were said to be reported by the media.

Members commented on the cases and asked further questions on consequences of such actions from a legal perspective. Officers explained the implications such as being asked to step down as an elected official and that the Monitoring Officer had the ability to refer to the police on such concerns.

The meeting ended at 6.29 pm

Chairman:

Date: Tuesday 26 March 2024

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Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Governance Committee

Wednesday 10 April 2024

Member Development Update

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Nathan England - Cabinet Member: Finance, Customer Services & Governance
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
Report Author:	Lorna Gordon – Mayor and Member Support Officer
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 384978 Email: lorna.gordon@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Governance Committee – 10 April 2024

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Governance Committee:

- 1.1 Note the contents of this report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Governance Committee with an update on the Member Learning and Development Programme.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Member Development Steering Committee on Thursday, 16 March 2023, Members agreed to the updated Member Learning & Development Programme 2023 – 2027 that was to be rolled out following the election on Thursday, 4 May 2023.

Member Development Update

- 3.2 The Member Development Programme offers a variety of modules and resources for both newly elected and returning Members to assist them in their roles as elected officials and to enable them to hit the ground running.
- 3.3 All training included in the programme is designed to furnish Members with the required level of knowledge, skills, learning and development, which is intended to be constantly 'evolving', taking into account the changing priorities of the organisation and Members' personal training needs throughout their term in office.
- 3.4 The Member Development Programme was split into four themes;
- Hit the ground running (May to mid-July 2023)
 - Operating as an effective councillor (September to early November 2023)
 - Roles and responsibilities (Late November 2023 to February 2024)
 - Continued professional development (Year 2 and 3)

At the time of writing this report the programme has now entered into the fourth phase, to continue professional development.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

Member Learning & Development Programme Update

- 4.1 Following the review of the Member Learning & Development Programme that was brought to the January 2024 meeting of the Governance Committee, the Member Support Team have undertaken an audit of Councillor attendance at all required and non-essential training sessions. There has been an ongoing effort to continuously improve Member's learning and development experience through Member feedback, best practice research and Local Government Association guidance.
- 4.2 In March 2023, all non-executive Borough Councillors received an email from Member Support detailing their individual training attendance record. This email also highlighted any required learning modules that they had yet to complete. Also included within the email was a link to complete an updated Microsoft Teams Feedback form and a copy of the Personal Development Plan initial skills assessment was attached.
- 4.3 The updated feedback form has been expanded for Members to review the Learning and Development Programme as a whole, rather than to review individual training sessions, as they had previously been invited to do. Questions around delivery methods, timings, engagement, and areas of improvement were included. Members were also asked to indicate if there had been any training sessions that they had not been able to attend that they would like to see repeated. Whilst only a small number of responses have been received at the time

Member Development Update

of writing, those received have been positive and have helped the Member Support Team identify areas where Members would benefit from additional support or training. For example, providing additional training on using the My Telford app and the Member Enquiry process. One Member had also noted that it would be beneficial to utilize the quarterly meetings with their Named Support Officer to review areas outside of their training, such as their surgery arrangements.

- 4.4 Feedback forms have highlighted that some Members have expressed a preference for remote learning and others for in person sessions. As a result of these findings, the Member Support Team will continue to provide a variety of both in person and online training for future sessions and any repeat sessions arranged, to cater to the different preferences of Members, as well as circulating details of upcoming training courses on the Councillor Connect portal and, in the Councillor Connect newsletter.
- 4.5 Following the AGM on 23, May 2024 and the confirmation of Committee appointments, the Member Support Team will be reaching out to Members regarding any specific Committee training they will need to undertake. To facilitate this there will be repeat sessions held for Planning Committee, Audit Committee, Licensing Committee, Appeals Committee and Scrutiny Committees organised as a priority. There will be a further review of what non-essential course's will be repeated based on Member feedback after the completion of required learning sessions.
- 4.6 During the Member Support Team's review of training attendance, the number of Member's who had not yet completed their Code of Conduct training was highlighted. The Member Development team have contacted members to remind them of their responsibilities to undertake Code of conduct training.
- 4.7 The Member Support Team will continue to carry out regular reviews of the successes and areas for improvement of the Member Development Programme and will report this back to the Governance Committee as appropriate. This review will include gathering additional feedback from all Members.
- 4.8 Members will receive regular communication regarding upcoming training opportunities, both from internal and external providers such as the LGA and Kings Fund.
- 4.9 The Member Support Team are still in the process of applying to be accredited with the Local Government Association Member Development Charter. The LGA Member Development Charter and Charter Plus was created to provide councils with a robust framework to benchmark member development and to continuously

Member Development Update

improve. It supports this continuing professional development for councillors by creating a contract between the council and its councillors that it commits to invest in councillors' growth and development.

- 4.10 The Member Support Team will continue to work towards Charter Plus accreditation and will continue to update the Committee about progress. It is hoped that Officers will be in a position to update Committee on timescales at the first meeting of Committee in the next municipal year.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council could choose not to seek LGA Charter accreditation, however given the robust framework it provides, it may be a missed opportunity to benchmark its learning and development offering against other Councils nationally.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct legal and HR implications arising from this report.

10.0 Ward Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct ward implications arising from this report.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report, but it should be noted that Committee is due to consider whether the Council's EDI training should be put forward as required learning for all Councillors.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Member Development Update

13.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

14.0 Background Papers

None.

15.0 Appendices

None.

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	28/03/2024	28/03/2024	RP

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