



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	
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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.

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- 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

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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

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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

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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