

Report of City Solicitor

Report to Member management Committee

Date: 24th March 2020

Subject: Member Development Strategy

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- This report sets out a five year Member Development Strategy which will underpin the training and development offer for elected Members.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- This strategy will contribute to our Best Council and Best City Ambitions and reflects our Council Values.
- It contributes to the seventh principle of the Corporate Governance Code and Framework which commits the council to “Develop our capacity and capability to be effective.”

3. Resource Implications

- The proposed strategy can be delivered within existing resources.

Recommendations

- a) Member Management Committee are requested to note the contents of this report and to approve the Member Development Strategy 2020-25.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed Member Development Strategy 2020-25 and seeks the committee's approval of the strategy and endorsement of the plan to deliver the Strategy through a Member Induction Programme and Member Development Programme to be established each year.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The member development offer currently being delivered has been broadly based on a Member Development Strategy and framework that was last updated in 2011. That framework concentrated on four learning and development themes, these being to deliver an extended Induction programme, a set of core skills, role specific modules and personal development.
- 2.2 Given the continuing and evolving role of elected Members, the demographic changes to the makeup of Members and including the step change since 2011 on the digital agenda, the existing strategy needs further enhancement to meet members' needs.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The new Member Development Strategy creates a structured training and learning offer to meet the full range of Member roles and personal development requirements.
- 3.2 In developing this strategy consideration has been given to the numerous roles of elected Members; as ward representatives, decision makers, and in holding decision makers to account. The Strategy reflects the importance of the leadership role of local ward members and their facilitation/enabling role with communities, schools, businesses, faith, charities and other sectors.
- 3.3 In addition to this the new strategy will deliver a core set of learning and development opportunities covering generic areas of knowledge for all elected Members.
- 3.4 By underpinning a programme of learning and development the strategy will ensure that Members are equipped to lead the delivery of the Council's Best City and Best Council ambitions and to model the values set out in the Best Council Plan.

Member Development Strategy

- 3.5 The Strategy has adopted an approach which brings together a number of strands in one overarching document. These strands can be summarised as follows::

New Members Induction

- 3.5.1 The Strategy identifies two strands to the Member Induction Programme, the first focussing on the knowledge required to understand how the council works and the corporate responsibilities a Member has, and the second seeking to deliver the practical skills a councillor will need. Within these two strands the Strategy recognises that there are some key skills and knowledge that need to be delivered very quickly after election to enable a newly elected councillor to get up to speed in the role. A further set of induction needs are then identified which are necessary to fully embed the councillor within their role and should therefore be delivered within the first six months of their first term of office.

3.5.2 The Induction will be further supported by a 'new member information' handbook which will be produced by Group Offices and provided to all new members.

Continuing Development Programme for All members

3.5.3 This part of the Strategy seeks to continue to provide the blend of knowledge based learning with the development of practical skills. The offer is intended to build on induction for new members but will be available to all members.

3.5.4 The offer recognises the unique development needs of each elected Member linked to the variety of roles to which they are appointed and their differing levels of ambition. This part of the Strategy seeks to address the learning requirements of more experienced members whilst still being open to all.

3.5.5 Whilst many learning and development opportunities can be delivered within the Council's existing resource, or commissioned to meet the bespoke needs of Leeds City Council Members, this part of the Strategy also recognises the value of external training. The LGA learning programme in particular can offer the opportunity for Members to obtain recognised qualifications as part of their ongoing development.

3.5.6 Suggested sessions include dedicated press and media training, a deeper look at corporate strategies and policies, a session or sessions focussed on local government finance and a more detailed look at the role of councillors by providing learning on the more unusual issues that can arise such as the designated person role and the wider role of the local government ombudsman and the council complaints process.

Bespoke Role Development

3.5.7 This section of the strategy is aimed at identifying collective training requirements that are specific to the needs of identified roles to which Members are appointed. Included within this section is the prescribed training required before Members can participate in the council's regulatory committees. Equally there are elements within this section of the Strategy which offer learning opportunities which Members may choose take up if they feel that they will be useful to them in their role.

Delivering the Strategy

3.6 To underpin the delivery of the Strategy a Member Development Programme will offer specific learning opportunities for Members to be delivered over the course of each municipal year. In addition Member Induction Programme will be delivered in each election year, or tailored to the needs of an individual councillor elected at a by-election.

3.7 Both the Member Induction Programme and the Member Development Programme, will include a range of delivery methods to reflect both the nature of the learning objectives of the session and the different learning styles of councillors. This will include;

3.7.1 face to face sessions which are

- kept short, preferably an hour unless content dictates that they must be longer;
- designed around member engagement and case studies etc. to keep the information relevant and accessible to Members;
- held in different locations to facilitate attendance and help Members orientate to the Council's presence in the city;

- held at times designed to facilitate attendance of Members;
 - backed up by easy to follow notes,
- 3.7.2 digital training using a variety of formats (for example webinars, e-learning, blogs etc.)
- 3.7.3 sign posting of relevant and valuable external learning resources and opportunities.

Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

- 3.8 The Member Development team will monitor engagement with the Induction Programme and Member Development Programme, and will seek feedback from Members in order to assess whether the Strategy and the learning programmes remain up to date and fit for purpose.
- 3.9 The Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed as necessary to ensure that it meets the needs of Members as elected representatives, leaders, advocates, and decision makers to equip them to exercise their responsibilities in the fast changing context of local government.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Councillors newly elected to Leeds City Council in the 2018 and 2019 cohorts were invited to contribute to a review of the induction programme which has informed the proposed Strategy in terms of the two part Member Induction programme.
- 4.1.2 Development of the Strategy has been carried out by officers with ongoing consultation with the Member Development and ICT working group established by this committee.
- 4.1.3 Proposals have taken into account feedback provided by Members in relation to Member development activity over the preceding municipal year.
- 4.1.4 The proposed Member Development Strategy has been shared with the Chief Executive, and other key officers integral to the in house delivery of the learning and development opportunities set out. Feedback has been taken into account in developing the strategy attached.
- 4.1.5 The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources has been consulted on the strategy and is in support of the proposal.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The Member Development Strategy includes a commitment to provide fair and consistent access to a range of learning and development opportunities, meeting a broad range of learning and development requirements.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The Member Development Strategy will contribute to the achievement of the Best City and Best Council ambitions and reflects the Council's values as contained within the Best Council Plan.

- 4.3.2 The seventh principle of the Corporate Governance Code and Framework states that “We will develop our capacity and capability to be effective.” The code sets out a commitment to “Ensuring that all councillors and employees have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform their roles effectively.”
- 4.3.3 This adoption of this updated Member Development Strategy supports and evidences this commitment.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.4 As part of the continuing development programme offered to all Members the Strategy offers opportunities to keep up to date with the latest developments around climate change.
- 4.3.5 Conscious of the need to reduce travel the methods of training delivery will also seek to incorporate opportunities for distance learning using on-line resources.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The Member Development Strategy can be met within existing financial and staffing resource.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 Delivery of the Member Development Strategy, through the training and development opportunities offered within the Member Induction Programme and Member Development Programme each year will ensure that Members remain up to date and able to comply with their legal powers and responsibilities.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The Strategy recognises and supports delivery of key learning and development to ensure that
 - a. Members are equipped to support constituents and the delivery the ambitions of the Best Council.
 - b. Members are supported to comply with statutory and regulatory frameworks which apply personally in their capacity as councillors.
 - c. Members appointed to the council's regulatory committees have the skills and knowledge to exercise their decision making functions within the relevant legal frameworks.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The refreshed Member Development Strategy 2020-25 underlines the council's commitment to developing the capability and capacity of its Members in the fast changing climate of local government.
- 5.2 The Strategy will provide the framework within which the Member Induction Programme and the Member Development Programme will be set each year.
- 5.3 Ongoing monitoring and review of the Strategy will ensure that it remains up to date and fit for purpose.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Member Management Committee are requested to note the contents of this report and to approve the Member Development Strategy 2020-25.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.