



DRAFT

Development Programme for Elected Members

A Development Programme for Sandwell Council Elected Members

1.0 Introduction

This Member Development Programme ('MDP') has been designed to assist Members lead their own development and ensure that they develop/acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to succeed in their various roles as a Councillor.

Sandwell Council wishes to build upon its successes as a "member-led" council and recognises that to do so all Elected Members have an important role to play in achieving this objective.

It is recognised that Elected Members can during their period of office (whether one or several terms) be appointed to various posts. The MDP is purposely designed to facilitate discussions and debate with all Elected Members and will specifically consider the following roles an Elected Member can undertake, namely:

- Chairperson
- Deputy Chairperson
- Committee Member
- Representative on an Outside Body (i.e. Director, Non-Executive Director, Trustee, Treasurer)
- Local Elected Member ('the Community Leader')

(A separate development programme is being developed for the Executive).

An outline project plan is set out below which is geared around a series of facilitated discussions with Elected Members concerning how they wish to design and shape the MDP. The project plan can be varied to include any other specific areas that Elected Members decide.

2. Brief context

The council has an ambitious Vision 2030 Plan. It is a Plan for the whole borough.

The Vision does not just focus on the council, its services, functions and finances but includes and involves other public sector partners and the third sector who need to be committed to delivering the ten Ambitions. It is recognised that delivery of the Vision requires the combined efforts by the council, Elected Members, all public sector partners, the third sector and the public.

The West Midlands Combined Authority ('WMCA') presents significant opportunity for the region and the council must command its position and role within the Combined Authority to ensure all potential benefits and opportunities are fully realised for the borough.

The council acknowledges that to achieve its ambitions for Sandwell, the council must adapt and continue building upon its strengths and successes.

All Elected Members will play an important role in ensuring that all the ten Ambitions are achieved and that all Combined Authority opportunities exploited. It is therefore imperative that Elected Members have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities (in all the roles that they undertake) to support the council deliver the 2030 Vision.

3. Methodology

The methodology underpinning the MDP is two-fold:

Firstly, the MDP seeks to specifically encourage and ensure effective engagement with Elected Members from the outset. A key feature of the approach is to gather views and ideas from all Elected Members concerning their development, training and support needs.

Secondly, the insight gathered will be evaluated to help devise a written MDP, which will be supplemented by Personal Development Plans for each Elected Member. The MDP will therefore be a bespoke and holistic development programme that specifically addresses both the current and future anticipated needs of Elected Members.

The purpose of the Members' Development Programme is to ensure that Member learning and development activities are aligned with Council objectives and priorities.

These objectives and priorities are determined having particular regard to:

- Vision 2030



and

- Our Values and Behaviours

Trust | Unity | Progress

The focus for all training and development activities offered to Members is to support them in their various roles helping the authority deliver on its objectives and priorities.

The programme provides Elected Members with opportunities to develop their understanding of relevant legislation, information, processes and the opportunity to develop their skills.

Learning and development will continue throughout the Elected Member's term of office.

Member development is overseen by the Standards and Member Development Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Core Council Services, Councillor Trow, is the portfolio lead for Member Development.

The Standards and Member Development Committee (or any established working group or sub-committee) is responsible for carrying out relevant consultation with political groups and Elected Members and for promotion of training and development opportunities.

4. PROPOSED APPROACH

It is imperative that Members own their MDP. With that in mind, the approach proposed is deliberately designed to afford Elected Members the opportunity to discuss, debate and then design and shape the MDP.

Step 1: Initial Discussion(s)

This approach will start with an initial discussion(s) with all Elected Members (in groups of approximately 25) which will be supported by a facilitator (such as WM Employers or the LGA) who will seek answers to the following three questions:

1. How can we become a stronger 'member-led' Council?
 2. How do/can I help lead the 'Place' locally and regionally?
- and
3. How can I be a Strong Community Leader?

To assist the discussion, it is proposed that Elected Members be provided with some case studies of other councils that have successfully achieved their objective of what a 'member-led' council looks like to them prior to the initial discussion(s) taking place.

Step 2: More In-depth Discussions

With support of a facilitator, specific meetings will take place with all those Elected Members undertaking following roles:

- Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons
- Committee Members (including Membership of Outside Body Committees)
- Representatives on Outside Bodies (i.e. Director, Non-Executive Director, Trustee, Treasurer)
- Local Elected Member ('the Community Leader')

These specific meetings are designed to ascertain views of Members undertaking the above roles with a specific focus on:

- Knowledge and expertise required
- Skills required
- Support Needs

Member Peers will also be engaged if available to provide insight into their own experiences and learning.

Member regional networks – Members can access existing WM regional networks facilitated by WM Employers and/or the Local Government Association. Such networks provide the opportunity to share learning, good practice and discuss emerging major policy issues.

Essential Training

These sessions will also consider the essential training Elected Members need or consider appropriate to undertake, such as:

- Planning
- Licensing (liquor and taxi)
- Standards – the ethical framework
- Safeguarding
- Being a Corporate Parent
- Information Governance

Step 3: Focused Workshops

Following steps 1 and 2 (or in conjunction with Step 2), a set of collective workshops will emerge to cover the issues that have been raised by Elected Members. The workshops will provide the opportunity for specific topic/issues to be explored in more detail to aid Elected Member learning and development.

To assist Elected Members visualise the types of workshops that could be developed and run, a suggested programme of workshops is detailed at Appendix 1.

The workshops can be changed, removed or replaced by different workshops as determined by the Standards and Member Development Committee.

It is proposed that the workshops are facilitated (i.e. by WM Employers or the LGA and/or Member Peers as required/possible).

A proposed schedule and timetable of workshops will be shared and approved by the Standards and Member Development Committee.

Step 4: The Personal Development Plan. (PDP)

The Personal Development Plan is the building block for the Elected Member training and development programme.

Objectives of the PDP are:

- To ensure that Elected Members have the support and development opportunities to enable them to carry out their various roles effectively.
- To increase organisational performance.
- To produce effective political leaders for the future.
- To ensure that new Elected Members receive an appropriate induction.
- To ensure that Elected Members taking on special responsibilities receive an appropriate induction and support in their role.
- To encourage Elected Members to identify their own learning needs and learning styles and develop appropriate solutions.
- To ensure that access to training and development is in line with the Council's priorities.
- To ensure that value for money is achieved from all Elected Member training and development activity.

Each Elected Member will have one-to-one meetings with a facilitator to discuss and agree details of their respective PDPs.

The PDP interviews will consider and review the outcomes of Steps 1-3 to ensure all requisite learning and development points are captured and learning requirements and actions agreed.

This is completed and reviewed on annual basis. It will consider previous year's learning and development needs as well as the learning and development needs for the ensuing year.

Consideration will be given to:

- Strategic recommendations from Council, Cabinet and/or the Standards and Member Development Committee including identified priorities and current/emerging issues.
- Recommendations from the Local Government Association and/or West Midlands Employers.
- Discussion with the Peer Member on individual Elected Member needs to consolidate skills or acquire new skills to carry out the varied elements of the Elected Member role(s) or to move to a new area of responsibility.
- These development needs could be delivered in several ways depending on the level of demand for training, the nature of the training requested and recognising that members will have preferred learning styles.
- Corporate Learning and development opportunities.
- Attendance at conferences and seminars.
- Coaching, shadowing and/or mentoring with Peer Members.
- Budget allocation

The Personal Development Plan Interview.

The Director – Monitoring Officer will also collate a training record for each individual Elected Member that can be made available for the PDP interview.

These PDP interviews are confidential. Training needs arising from the interview will be notified to the Director – Monitoring Officer to assist in the formulation of the Elected Member training programme for the year.

The individual Elected Member training and development needs will be identified through these PDP meetings which will be informed by Steps 1-3 above.

The PDP will:

- Outline what individual Elected Member learning, development and support needs are required.
- Capture any recommendations from peer reviews and external inspections that are relevant to Elected Member development and ensure that improvements are implemented.
- Be delivered in a timely manner.
- Be reviewed annually to ensure that it is meeting its aims and objectives

5. Elected Members Commitment to Learning and Development.

For learning and development to be effective, Elected Members must be willing to take part and embrace the process.

All Elected Members are encouraged to take part in the Development Programme.

Some elements of the training and development programme are considered essential and will be identified through the PDP process.

All Elected Members will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that they attend when learning and development sessions are arranged.

Elected Members will be asked to complete evaluation forms in respect of training events to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the training programme.

6. New Member Induction Programme.

The Standards and Member Development Committee is responsible for approving the new Elected Member induction programme. The induction programme is reviewed annually following feedback from inducted Elected Members.

Induction comprises the formal acceptance of office; an individual tailored induction programme facilitated by the Member Services over a period of six months, that will include sharing of key information, sessions on subject such as 'how the Council works', Directorate presentations, Members' Code of Conduct, etc.

The induction will identify the learning and development needs training needs through the Personal Development Process.

A new Elected Member will also be supplied with information document setting out what support will be available from Member Services and how best to access their services.

An Induction Checklist will be completed.

The induction process will identify a political mentor, facilitated if necessary through a matching and contact service via the Director – Monitoring Officer.

7. Indicative Timeline

- November/December 2017

The Standards and Member Development Committee approves the Elected Member Development Programme Plan and Timetable.

The Committee establishes a Standards and Member Development Working Group to support the Elected Member Development Programme.

Recruitment exercise undertaken to engage requisite facilitation support to help deliver the Programme.

- December 2017

The Director – Monitoring Officer will prepare and circulate an Information Pack that contain key details of the Elected Member Development Programme and timetable.

The Information Pack will consist of (inter alia):

- Summary of the Elected Member Development Programme and Timetable
- Background material relating to key subject matters such as Vision 2030 strategic narrative, objectives and priorities, scrutiny function, localism, commercialisation, devolution, key council performance information
- Case studies relating to the background material (above)
- Summary of key Partnerships

- Key information relating to the Third Sector
- Council's Governance Framework
- Council's Ethical Framework
- Available local, regional and national networks
- Essential training (regulatory functions i.e. planning, licensing)
- Results/feedback of the previous year's training events

- January 2018

Initial discussions held with Elected Members to set out the Member Development Programme and examine the following questions:

1. How can we become a stronger 'member-led' Council?
2. How do/can I help lead the 'Place' locally and regionally?
and
3. How can I be a Strong Community Leader?

- January 2018

Series of separate in-depth discussion with:

- Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons
- Committee Members (including Membership of Outside Body Committees)
- Representatives on Outside Bodies (i.e. Director, Non-Executive Director, Trustee, Treasurer)
- Local Elected Member ('the Community Leader')

The purpose of the sessions is to:

- discuss the role in detail – define its purpose, scope, remit, powers and associated duties and responsibilities
- how to command the role
- determine the knowledge, skills, experience and/or expertise required to successfully undertake the role
- ascertain precisely the support required to carry out the role

- January/February 2018

Workshops – Specific themes/work streams considered to aid better understanding of key subject matters relating to the delivery of the 2030 Vision. The workshops allow for broader strategic and cross-cutting issues to be identified and understood, which includes examining the role and relationships between the public, private and third sectors.

(The subject matters for workshops determined by the Standards and Member Development Committee in Nov/Dec 2017).

- January 2018

The Director – Monitoring Officer to refresh the council's Induction Programme for newly Elected Member. Discussions to be held with the most recent newly Elected Members so that lessons can be learned.

The Induction Programme to be approved by the Standards and Member Development Committee.

- February 2018

Evaluation and analysis of the information gathered from all discussions and workshops. The feedback/findings to be categorised thematically and prioritised taking account of the various roles Elected Members undertake. A defined support package to be developed to complement identified development/training.

This information to be considered by the Standards and Member Development Committee before being used to inform the PDPs.

The Committee to agree the support arrangements for Elected Members in their various roles. Requisite support requirements will be actioned as quickly as practicably possible.

- March/Early April 2018

PDP Interviews arranged with Elected Members and a facilitator to discuss and agree development, training and specific support needs.

- April 2018

Following completion of all PDPs, development, training and support needs are reviewed and evaluated to produce a Master Development and Training Programme and timetable which will be approved by the Standards and Member Development Committee.

Where a significant number of Elected Members identify a common learning need, the Director – Monitoring Officer will source providers and estimate the cost of providing the training. This detail will be included in the Master Development and Training Programme

- May/June 2018

Member Induction - Roll out Member Induction Programme for newly Elected Members

- Early June 2018

Launch of new Elected Member Development Programme.

- Mid October – Late January 2018

The Standards and Member Development Committee will undertake an annual review of the Elected Member Development Programme and Elected Member Induction Programme.

Committee to make such changes or undertake such action as its considered appropriate to promote and maintain the effectiveness of both programmes, their aims and objectives.

- February/March 2019

Refresh/update all PDPs.

Revise the Elected Member Induction Programme

- Late May - Early June 2019

Roll out annual Elected Member Induction programme

Launch of annual Elected Member Development Programme.

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Appendix 1

SUGGESTED WORKSHOPS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

A Programme for Elected Members

It is proposed that a multiple session modular programme be established. Each session would be tailored for half-day or whole-day sessions depending on what outcome Members/Member Development Steering Group are seeking.

Workshop 1 – Meeting the challenge – broadening horizons

An overview of the national picture in respect of public sector, funding, and the implications for the council: what are the difficult choices ahead? The session will consider of a range of approaches being taken by councils elsewhere to meet the challenge.

Workshop 2 – Working in on the Regional footprint

This session will enable members to explore the implications of the West Midlands Combined Authority (CA). This will enable members to discuss and examine how they can get the most out of the work of the CA, influence and ensure Sandwell continues to play a strong role in the work of the CA. We will also draw on learning from other combined authority areas.

Workshop 3 – Making decisions on local authority finances

This session will provide an overview of local authority finances, how they are structured and the governance framework. The session will provide details on the council's Treasury Management function, the financial challenges facing local government and how we are meeting the financial challenge.

Workshop 4 – Commercialisation – Being a more commercial council

This will explore how councils can seize opportunities to take a more commercial approach. We will reflect on lessons learned from the council's current commercial work. We will focus on a wide range of examples from approaches other authorities have taken and explore issues like developing robust business cases and managing risk around more commercial approaches.

Workshop 5 – Localism and Devolution - Building more resilient communities

This session will introduce practical tools and techniques for neighbourhood and community engagement, from the perspective of the Cabinet Member. It will explore how local ward issues can be balanced against the wider needs of the council. It will also explore how Cabinet Members can work with local residents to make communities less reliant on public services.

Workshop 6 – Managing Demand

This will examine how the council manages demand for its services including the underlying drivers and how behaviour change, channel shift and education can lead to better outcomes for residents.

Workshop 7 – Connecting with communities: communications and using social media effectively

This very hands-on session can be delivered in two strands if desired:

- For beginners – learning the basics about different communication techniques and different social media options, why and when to use them to engage effectively with local people.
- For those already using social media – learning best practice tips including how to build an active social network, and support community empowerment