

# Report to Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

**5 March 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Member Development Update
<b>Director:</b>	Assistant Chief Executive, James McLaughlin
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Lead Officer for Mayoralty and Member Development - Ruth Darby <a href="mailto:ruth_darby@sandwell.gov.uk">ruth_darby@sandwell.gov.uk</a>







## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the detail of elected member learning and development activity that has been delivered since the previous Committee report on 7 November 2023 be noted.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is mandated to have oversight of Member Development activity, with the aim of ensuring Councillors are appropriately supported in their roles.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

  	  	<p>Targeted Member Development activity aims to support all ambitions and objectives in the Corporate Plan.</p>
---	---	---



## 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Member Development Programme (MDP) aims to offer learning and development in support of Member effectiveness and confidence in their roles. The MDP is frequently reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the identified and emerging needs of elected members and the wider organisation.

### Training and Member induction to date

4.2 Whilst a number of programmed events are initially targeted toward newly elected Councillors as part of the induction programme, attendance is widened to include all Members, to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience. The learning and development events are offered over a variety of medians and the use of external facilitators is incorporated where possible. In addition, Members are encouraged to access national programmes with the aim of networking and benchmarking with colleagues from other local authorities.

### Learning and Development from May 2023 to date:

4.3 A total of 27 training sessions have been held since May 2023. Although this number is lower than the number of sessions provided (31), this is based on the statistics recorded as indicators.

Average attendance is 18 per session.

Lowest attendance recorded – 5 – Prevent Awareness

Highest attendance recorded – 26 – Ethical Framework Code of Conduct.

The ‘meet and greet’ marketplace session, held in May 2023, was an informative session to enable Councillors to meet staff and learn more about services offered by the Council, had 51 attendees. LGA representatives were also in attendance.



**Learning and Development session from 7 November 2023 (last committee) to date:**

<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Learning &amp; Development Activity</b>	<b>No. Attendees</b>
14/11/23	Strategic Question Skills	21
16/11/23	GDPR	7
20/11/23	GDPR	17
13/12/23	Strategic Question Skills	15
09/01/23	CIPFA	20
31/01/23	Safeguarding	11
<b>Sessions scheduled for February/March 2024</b>		
28/02/24	Officer/Member relations	
29/02/24	Suicide Prevention Awareness Session	
05/03/24	Dementia Friends Session	
06/03/24	Personal Safety	
18/03/24	Suicide Prevention Awareness	

- 4.4 Feedback to date indicates that programmed events have been well received. Newly elected/newer members have welcomed the opportunity of in-person interaction and to meet and build effective working relationships with officers.
- 4.5 The completion and return of evaluation forms continues to be challenging and the new system of emailing the evaluation form to all attendees has been introduced. Feedback/evaluations received differs for each session, therefore, a further improved method of collecting feedback evaluations is being incorporated allowing for a more efficient way to record responses in a better way.



- 4.6 A continued review of member PDPs is currently being undertaken for the 2024/25 programme and an update will be provided.
- 4.7 The MDP remains a live document that aims to meet any evolving development need and regular updates will continue to be presented to the Committee throughout the year. Alongside the Council's development offer, we also encourage Members to access the offer from partner organisations including the Local Government Association and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This includes a range of on-line resources, workbooks, webinars and in-person development activities and programmes that complement the Council's programme. Where possible, opportunities for shared learning with other local authorities will also be explored to ensure best practice is shared and an opportunity to network with peers.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/councillor-and-officer-development/highlighting-political-leadership>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/councillor-development-resources>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/councillor-and-officer-development/councillor-hub>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/councillor-and-officer-development/councillor-workbooks>

## **The approach to Member Development Programme 2024/25**

- 4.9 Whilst the Member Development Programme of 2023/24 is still current, with training sessions continuing to be arranged, the process for next year's programme has already commenced, having recognised this year, some changes that need to be made.

Due to a recent change in senior management, further discussions of how to better engage with Councillors are being currently being considered in addition to those reported previously.



## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Training that forms the member development programme will involve a range of providers and support being utilised to ensure effective development and learning. The costs of such support will be met from existing approved budgets.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	<p>An effective Member Development Programme will help ensure the council make informed decisions and empower Members in undertaking their various roles.</p> <p>Members in relation to regulatory matters/functions are required to undertake specific kinds of training such as planning, licensing, standards, safeguarding.</p> <p>Supporting Members in their development, training and support needs strengthens the council's governance arrangements.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	Where engagement in learning and development is limited, there are risks associated with Members being insufficiently supported, particularly when undertaking statutory roles.
<b>Equality:</b>	The revised Member Development Programme will address any Equality Act implications and issues arising.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	None in relation to this report
<b>Social Value:</b>	The Member Development Programme has recently been reviewed and revised to ensure Elected Members have the requisite skills, support and knowledge necessary to undertake their various roles.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Targeted training on the Council's responsibilities for climate change and the environment will need to be incorporated into the member development programme.



<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	Training on members corporate parenting responsibilities is delivered annually to ensure they are aware and are better able to conduct their role effectively.
-----------------------------	--

## 6. Appendices

None

## 7. Background Papers

Member Development Programme

