



## Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee

<b>Title</b>	Member Development Programme 2022-2026
<b>Date of meeting</b>	15 April 2024
<b>Report of</b>	Executive Director Assurance and Public Protection
<b>Wards</b>	All Wards
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>Appendix A – Delivered Sessions and Attendance, July 2023 – March 2024</p> <p>Appendix B – Member Development Programme 2024/25</p> <p>Appendix C – LGA Charter Plus Accreditation</p> <p>Appendix D – ‘Strengths and Continuous Improvement’ Feedback from Charter Plus assessment</p>
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### Summary

To support Councillors to be effective in their various roles, it is essential that the council has in place a comprehensive programme of briefings and development activity. Since the 2018 Local Elections, the council has taken a more structured approach towards Member Development and Induction.

Regular reports have presented to this committee, and its predecessor committee, on the progress and delivery of the Member Development and Induction Programme. The last update was presented to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards (GARMS) Committee on 24 July 2023.

Further to achieving Local Government Association (LGA) Chartered Status for the Member Development Programme in January 2021, Barnet continued to improve on the Programme and was awarded LGA Charter Plus Accreditation in January 2024.

## Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the sessions delivered since July 2023 (Appendix A) and provide feedback on these (if any).
2. That the Committee agree the forward plan of Member Development sessions and the leadership development proposal from the LGA as set out in Appendix B.
3. That the Committee note:
  - That Barnet has met the criteria to achieve Charter + (Plus) status for the Member Development Programme (Appendix C) and was awarded Charter + status by London Councils on 30 January 2024; and
  - The feedback from the LGA Assessors (Appendix D) which will form part of the continuing Member Development work.
4. That the Committee note the reduction of the Member Development Budget as detailed in section 5.1.

### 1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Councillors are responsible for setting the overall policy direction of the council and overseeing the delivery of a range of services, many of which are complex or have a statutory basis. Expectations of councillors by residents are high – they want their Council to deliver high quality services and respond quickly to changing demands despite increasing financial constraints. To be effective Councillors need to be able to:
  - Represent the views of their political party and constituents.
  - Contribute to the good governance of the council.
  - Understand local government and the legal framework that it operates within; and
  - Be knowledgeable about local policy, services, and communities.
- 1.2 In addition to serving on Council, committees and boards, councillors may also be appointed to a range of outside bodies which have their own governance arrangements (e.g. school governing bodies, community organisations, charities, trusts, companies, etc).
- 1.3 The purpose of the Member Development and Induction Programme is to ensure:
  - Sessions meet identified training and development needs and support them to be effective councillors;
  - There are clear expectations of Members in relation to training and development;
  - Sessions are commissioned and details circulated to Members well in advance; and
  - There is an understanding from Members about which sessions are mandatory, which are recommended, and which are optional.
- 1.4 As such, Member buy-in for the Programme is essential in ensuring that it meets their training and development needs and supports them to be effective councillors. To ensure that the Programme is Member-led, the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG), which meets quarterly and is made up of the Party Group Leaders, the Group Whips and Political Assistants, continues to be consulted on all training and development proposals.
- 1.5 Regular development sessions and training opportunities have been provided and reported to this committee for Member oversight.

- 1.6 Details of the sessions completed since the last report to Committee (24 July 2023) are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.7 Since the last report to this committee, officers have continued to implement and promote the Member Development and Induction Programme for new and returning Members for the period May 2022 to May 2026. Officers engaged with council directors and the MDSG in developing the proposals and detailed plans for the 2022 to 2026 Programme. Feedback from elected Members and officers on the previous 2018 induction programme was key and incorporated into the Programme.
- 1.8 Officers have successfully implemented the Member Development Programme throughout 2023 and early 2024, and are engaging with the MDSG and Senior Management Team (SMT) to draft the programme for 2024/25. Officers have continued to seek feedback from Members to help to inform future planning.
- 1.9 To encourage participation, the Governance Service sends text message reminders to all Members on the day of each training, and Members have reported finding this helpful.
- 1.10 Over the past year the Governance Service has developed the Member Development pages on the Members Intranet, including signposting to additional training material and making recordings of each training session available to Members either by email, on the Members' Intranet or both. Officers have requested that Members attending by viewing the recording still provide feedback on the sessions, and inform the Governance Service that they have viewed the recording, for accurate record-keeping of attendances.
- 1.11 Some additional Member training requirements were identified at the time of the last report to committee to enable successful implementation of the Governance Review. This was provided and included training for prospective Cabinet Members, and those who will sit on overview and scrutiny committees and task and finish groups. This work continues as the Executive system is further embedded, with a focus on leadership and scrutiny.
- 1.12 This committee agreed in July 2023 that the following sessions should remain mandatory:
- a) Adult Safeguarding for all Members;
  - b) Children's Safeguarding for all Members;
  - c) Code of Conduct and Register of Interest for all Members;
  - d) Licensing for all committee Members; and
  - e) Planning for all committee members and substitute Members.
- 1.13 Since the last committee further mandatory training sessions have been held on Planning, Licensing, and the Code of Conduct. A repeat Safeguarding Adults training is due to be held on 15 May 2024.

<b>Training Session</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Level of attendance</b>
Strategic Planning, Planning Committee A, Planning Committee B	All Members and Substitute Members on the Committee	100%
Licensing Committee	All Members and Substitute Members on the Committee	100%
Code of Conduct and Register of Interest	All Members	100%

Children's Safeguarding	All Members	57% (36 of 63 Members)
Adult Safeguarding	All Members	34.5% (23 of 63 Members)

1.14 Mandatory training statistics have been referred to each political Group.

1.15 Officers give Members the option of watching back most training sessions in the programme to allow Members to review the content if they were unable to attend at the scheduled time.

1.16 As previously reported, officers have been working towards LGA Charter + accreditation via the Charter for Member Development. An update on progress towards Charter + was reported to the committee on 24 July 2023. Since that meeting the officers have continued to progress this work, including 22 Members (35%) undertaking confidential Personal Development Plans (PDP) one-to-one with an external advisor. The programme was open to all Councillors although it was particularly targeted to include the participation of the Councillors elected for the first time on the 6 May 2022. The programme was also deliberately timed to coincide with the governance change from a Committee System to an Executive model of governance.

The one-to-one discussion was structured and facilitated to include the following:

- An understanding of the background of each Councillor, professional and political
- Key skills and aspects of the Council in which they had an interest.
- A review of key development undertaken following their election.
- Personal goals and ambitions including ward, political and Council.
- Specific individual development needs and priorities over the next twenty- four months.
- Preferred personal learning styles and.
- Time and structure of learning and development

A priorities analysis and summary of PDPs was reported to the Head of Governance and the key recommendations and individual requests will be taken forward by the Governance Service over the next year.

1.17 In January 2024, the council was assessed for Charter + and was awarded the accreditation, being one of only three of all the London Boroughs to achieve this. Details of the criteria that were met are set out in Appendix C. The Governance Service continues to build on the Programme's format and content, based on feedback received from the Charter + assessment (Appendix D) and as requested by Members and officers. The Council received a certificate and trophy, and the Leader will receive a presentation at the next London Councils Leaders' Committee after which this achievement will be communicated internally and externally.

1.18 An LGA Peer Review took place in June 2023 and one of the emerging recommendations related to leadership development for the Cabinet and Cabinet Members. A Cabinet/CMT away day was held in January 2024, and included reflections on the previous 18 months, discussion of shared values for effective leadership, becoming more effective to deliver for Barnet, and horizon scanning to 2026 and beyond. The Governance Service is working with the LGA on further bespoke leadership training. Full details and a proposal are available and referred to in Appendix B.

## 2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

- 2.1 The Committee could choose not to develop and implement a Member Development and Induction Programme. This approach is not recommended as it could leave the Council at risk of some decisions being successfully appealed by judicial review or other appeal mechanisms (e.g. Planning Inspectorate). In addition, failing to develop and deliver a Development Programme could result in Members serving on committees or other bodies when they do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to be effective (e.g. treasury management, pensions, etc).
- 2.2 The Committee could choose not to continue to develop its Programme and not be assessed for Charter/Charter + status (renewable every three years). Given the relatively small additional resource involved in doing so, and the likely current and future benefit to the council in continuing to attract and retaining a diverse range of skilled Councillors, this approach is not recommended.

## 3. Post Decision Implementation

- 3.1 Officers will continue to implement a comprehensive Member Development programme for the period 2022 – 2026.
- 3.2 Officers will also work on addressing areas of continuous improvement as identified by South East Employers following our Charter + assessment. Progress on addressing these areas will be reported to the MDSG for Member oversight.
- 3.3 Findings and recommendations from the June 2023 LGA Peer Review are being incorporated into the Programme over the next year.

## 4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

### Corporate Plan

- 4.1 Providing a framework to enable Members to be effective councillors supports delivery of all Council priorities.

### Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures

- 4.2 There are no specific corporate performance / outcome measure related to the Member Development Programme.

### Sustainability

- 4.3 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

### Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 Councillors are corporate parents to looked after children and children in care. In recognition of the seriousness of this responsibility, the Programme includes mandatory sessions for all Members on corporate parenting and safeguarding children in order that Members are clear on their duties and obligations in this regard.

### Risk Management

- 4.5 As set out in section 3.1 above. Furthermore, not engaging the Committee in the development of the programme would risk Members not being able to shape their own development

	<b>Insight</b>
4.6	N/A
	<b>Social Value</b>
4.7	N/A
<b>5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)</b>	
5.1	As part of the Member Allowances budget, a proportion (£15,000) is available to support Member Development in 2024/25.
5.2	In setting the budget for 2024/25 it was identified that there has been a year-on-year underspend on the previous Member Development budget (£22,500) over the previous three years. As such, Council have agreed that the Member Development element of the Members Allowances budget should be reduced by £7,500 to £15,000 for 2024/25. This revised budget is still sufficient to deliver a comprehensive programme and compares favourably to other London Boroughs development budgets.
<b>6. Legal Implications and Constitution References</b>	
6.1	Council Constitution, Part 2B, Terms of Reference and Delegation of Duties to Committees and Sub-Committees) the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee has the following powers and duties: Paragraph 2.4.23 – “To oversee Member Development.”
<b>7. Consultation</b>	
7.1	Councillors, Chief Officers, senior managers, and political groups have been consulted on the Member Development Programme and comments and amendments made have been considered in the drafting and delivery of the programme.
<b>8. Equalities and Diversity</b>	
8.1	The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups.
8.2	It is proposed that a specific module on equalities is delivered as part of the Programme which will include: unconscious bias; and the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.
8.3	Requirement of Charter+ is to ensure that the council has a corporate commitment to considering ways to promote the role of Councillor to all sections of the community and offers ongoing support to all Councillors with their development.
<b>9. Background Papers</b>	
9.1	General Functions Committee, 19 March 2018, Item 7 (Member Development Programme): <a href="http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&amp;MId=9287&amp;Ver=4">http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&amp;MId=9287&amp;Ver=4</a>
9.2	Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 22 October 2018, Item 12 (Member Development Programme): <a href="http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&amp;MId=9502&amp;Ver=4">http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&amp;MId=9502&amp;Ver=4</a>

- 9.3 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 7 October 2019, Item 9 (Member Development Programme):  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=9855&Ver=4>
- 9.4 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 12 October 2020, Item 12 (Member Development Programme):  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=10215&Ver=4>
- 9.5 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 4 October 2021, Item 12 (Member Development Programme 2018 – 2022 Update and Draft Member Development Programme 2022 – 2026):  
[Agenda for Constitution and General Purposes Committee on Monday 4th October, 2021, 7.00 pm | Barnet Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.6 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 6 October 2022, Item 13 (Member Development Programme 2022-26): [Member Development and Induction Programme 2022-2026.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.7 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 6 October 2022, Item 10 (Member Development Programme 2022-26): [Agenda for Constitution and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 12th January, 2023, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.8 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 12 January 2023, Item 10 (Member Development Programme 2022-26): [Agenda for Constitution and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 12th January, 2023, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.9 Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee, 24 July 2023, Item 12 (Member Development Programme 2022-26) [Member Development Programme 2022 - 2026 and Charter Plus Action Plan.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)