



Constitution and General Purposes Committee

6 October 2022

Title	Member Development Programme 2022-2026
Report of	Executive Director of Assurance
Wards	All Wards
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Delivered Sessions for Member Development Programme (September 2021 to September 2022) Appendix B – Member Development Planned Sessions
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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 other development activity. Since the 2018 Local Elections, the Council have taken a more structured approach towards Member Development and Induction. With input and support from Members and Officers, a programme of induction and development has been developed and approved annually.

Governance Service has coordinated and rolled out a programme of development covering a variety of Councillor responsibilities. The details of the sessions completed since the last report to this Committee are set out at Appendix A.

Planned activity for the forthcoming period is set out in Appendix B.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the sessions delivered since September 2021 as set out in Appendix A and provide feedback on sessions delivered to date.**
- 2. That the Committee agree the forward plan of Member Development sessions as set out in Appendix B.**
- 3. That the Committee note that officers will commence work on assessment for Charter+ (Plus) status in 2022/23.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 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 all within ever 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 and committees, 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 supports them to be effective councillors;
 - There are clear expectations of Members in relation to training and development;
 - Sessions are commissioned 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, which meets regularly 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 the Constitution and General Purposes Committee for Member oversight. Details of the sessions completed since the last report to Committee (in October 2021) are set out in Appendix A.

Progress since October 2021

- **May 2022 induction programme**

- 1.6 Since the last report to this committee, officers have implemented the Member Development and Induction Programme for the new and returning Members for the period May 2022 to May 2026. Officers engaged with council directors and the Member Development Steering Group in the developing the proposals and detailed plans for the 2022 to 2026 Development and Induction Programme. Feedback from elected Members and officers on the previous 2018 induction programme was key and incorporated into the plan.

- 1.7 Officers successfully implemented the induction programme as agreed with two events on the 9th of May at Hendon Town Hall and 11th May at Colindale. In relation to the Induction Day, this was primarily focused on new Members receiving a high-level overview of the Council via the Chief Executive's presentation, collection of IT kit and agreement of IT and information management policies applicable to Members, and the completion of various forms. The attendance was excellent and the drop in format worked well. The drop-in session at Colindale was also well attended and provided an overview of Council service and an opportunity to meet key officers from across the Council. Officers have since sought feedback to help to support future planning and gain a better understanding on what worked and did not work for Councillors.

- **Members Handbook**

- 1.8 To support the Member Development and Induction Programme, a Member's Handbook has also been designed and finalised. The hard copy was distributed to all elected Members immediately after the election. The handbook is a live document, which can be updated as and when required and is hosted on the Members Intranet page.

- **Supporting paperless meetings with the Modern.Gov App**

- 1.9 Following the decision to cease distribution of hard copy papers for all Committee meetings, the Governance Service has delivered several induction and drop-in sessions for Members on the functions of the Modern.Gov application. These sessions have provided councillors with the skills to effectively go paperless at meetings. The sessions have been attended by a number of Members and further one-to-one sessions and support is available.
- 1.10 The Modern.Gov Application is installed on Members council issued laptop and enables the user to access and annotate Committee reports. A tutorial

video is also available to support Members with the functionality of the App and can be accessed on the Members Intranet Page.

- **Mandatory Training**

Following consultation with the Member development steering group and the monitoring officer the following sessions have been agreed will be mandatory as follows:

- a) **Adults 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 Cllrs on the committee**
- e) **Planning for Cllrs on the committee.**

Training Session	Members	Level of attendance
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	82.5% (52 of 63 Members)
Children’s Safeguarding	All Members	44.5% (28 of 63 Members)
Adults Safeguarding	All Members	36.5% (23 of 63 Members)

1.11 Officers are working with both political groups and offering a recording of the training session for Members to review at a more convenient time. We will look to improve the update and report at the next update to this Committee.

- **Charter+ (Plus) status**

1.12 As previously reported officers have been working towards having the Programme externally accredited via the Charter for Member Development. Our Programme was assessed in January 2021 and the Council was awarded Charter Status. Since then, the Governance Service have been working to deliver the areas of improvement identified and prepare for re-assessment in 18 months’ time. The Committee is therefore asked to note that that officers will commence work on assessment for Charter+ (Plus) status in 2022/23.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To ensure that Members have appropriate knowledge and skills to discharge their various roles as a councillor including taking decisions, monitoring the Council's work, acting as a corporate parent and managing casework.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 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).

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Officers will continue to implement a comprehensive Member Development programme for the period 2022 – 2026.
- 4.2 Officers will also work on addressing areas of improvement as identified by South East Employers following our assessment for Charter Status. Progress on addressing these areas will be reported to the Member Development Steering Group for Member oversight.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

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

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 As part of the Member Allowances budget, a proportion (£22,500) is available to support Member Development. In 2021/22 the total spend was £15,720.00. including some items that were being delivered in 2022/23. Due to the May 2022 Local Election, officers were aware there would be added pressure on the budget as such some external training sessions were booked and paid for in the 2021/22 financial budget.
- 5.2.2 A recent survey of the London Member Development Network indicate that our training budget was comparable to other London Authorities in 2022/23.

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 N/A

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Council Constitution, Article 7 (Committees, Sub-Committees, Forums and Working Groups and Partnerships) – the Constitution and General Purposes Committee has specific responsibility for Member Development.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 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.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 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.
- 5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.
- 5.6.3 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.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

- 5.7.1 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.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.8.1 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.

5.8 Insight

- 5.8.1 N/A

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 General Functions Committee, 19 March 2018, Item 7 (Member Development Programme):

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=9287&Ver=4>

- 6.2 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 22 October 2018, Item 12 (Member Development Programme): <http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=9502&Ver=4>
- 6.3 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>
- 6.4 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>
- 6.5 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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)