



Constitution and General Purposes Committee

12th January 2023

Title	Member Development Programme 2022-2026 and Charter Plus Action Plan
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 2022 to December 2022) Appendix B – Member Development Programme Appendix C – Charter Plus criteria and action areas Appendix D – Sample Personal Development Plans
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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.

A report was presented to Constitution and General Purposes Committee (C&GPC) on 6th October 2022 outlining the details of the Barnet Member Development and Induction Programme since May 2022, future training plans and proposals to submit an application to London Councils towards Charter Plus.

The Governance Service, with input and support from Members and Officers, co-ordinates and rolls out a programme of development covering a variety of Councillor responsibilities, which is approved annually.

The details of the sessions completed and attendance since the last report to C&GPC are set out at Appendix A.

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

Progress and a proposed Action Plan towards Charter Plus Status are detailed in Appendix C.

Sample Personal Development Plans (PDPs) are provided in Appendix D

Officers' Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the sessions delivered since October 2022 as set out in Appendix A and provide feedback on these.**
- 2. That the Committee agree the forward plan of Member Development sessions as set out in Appendix B.**
- 3. That the Committee note the progress towards assessment for Charter+ (Plus) status in 2022/23, provide feedback on the Action Plan and decide on a proposal for Personal Development Plans for Members (Appendix D).**

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 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 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 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 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 (6th October 2022) are set out in Appendix A.

PROGRESS SINCE OCTOBER 2022

- 1.6 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 plan.
- 1.7 Officers have successfully implemented the Member Development Programme throughout 2022, encouraged attendance using text reminders for all sessions, and are engaging with the MDSG and Senior Management Team (SMT) to draft the programme for 2023/24. Officers have continued to seek feedback from Members to help to inform future planning.
- 1.8 The Governance Service recently set up text message reminders to all Members on the day of each training, and Members have reported finding this helpful.

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, and ad hoc support prior to committee meetings, for Members on the functions of the Modern.Gov application, enabling committees to become paperless. Ongoing sessions and one-to-one support are available.
- 1.10 The Modern.Gov application is installed on Members' council-issued laptops and enables the user to access and annotate committee reports. Members

can also access the application on their own devices (e.g. phone, tablet or laptop). A tutorial video is also available to support Members with the functionality of the app and can be accessed on the Members' Intranet Page (Members' IT Handbook, Policies and Support).

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 1.11 Some Member training requirements are emerging as part of the Governance Review, particularly training for prospective Cabinet Members and those who will sit on overview and scrutiny bodies. These requirements are being scoped out as part of the Review and will be delivered at the appropriate time to ensure that Members have the required knowledge and skills in advance of the new governance system going live in May 2023.

MANDATORY TRAINING

- 1.12 Following consultation with the MDSG and the Monitoring Officer the following sessions have been agreed as mandatory:

- 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	90.5% (57 of 63 Members)
Children's Safeguarding	All Members	44.5% (28 of 63 Members)
Adults Safeguarding	All Members	36.5% (23 of 63 Members)

- 1.13 Officers are working with both political groups and offering a recording of the training session for Members to review if they were unable to attend. Attendance statistics have been reported to the Groups and officers have requested support in encouraging outstanding Members to complete the training. We will look to improve the uptake and report back at the next update to this Committee.

CHARTER+ (PLUS) STATUS

- 1.14 As previously reported officers have been working towards external accreditation for the Programme via the Charter for Member Development.
- 1.15 The Programme was assessed in January 2021 and the Council was awarded Charter Status. The Council are not due to be reassessed until January 2024. However, an interim review took place in November 2022 and the Council continue to meet all the Charter status criteria. . The Committee is asked to note that officers have commenced work on assessment for Charter+ (Plus) status which will continue into 2023/24.
- 1.16 Given the proposed change to the Executive model of governance, some adjustments will need to be made to the Member Development Programme. The training required to manage the transition to the Executive model, such as leadership training for Cabinet Members and training for Members who will sit on overview and scrutiny committees, will also contribute towards the Charter Plus accreditation given its focus on leadership training. Personal Development Plans (PDPs) will also be rolled out for Members.
- 1.17 The proposed Charter Plus Action Plan (Appendix C) covers the criteria which have not yet been met and identifies actions to fulfil Charter Plus Criteria, including proposals for implementing PDPs for Members and for evaluation of the Programme.
- 1.18 Appendix D contains sample PDPs from South East Employers.

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).
- 3.2 The Committee could choose not to develop a submission for Charter Plus status. Given the relatively small additional resource involved in progressing towards Charter Plus, and the likely current and future benefit to the council in

continuing to attract and retaining a diverse range of skilled Councillors, this approach would not be recommended.

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 and progress towards Charter Plus. Progress on addressing these areas will be reported to the MDSG for Member oversight.
- 4.3 Subject to the agreement of the MDSG and sufficient resources being identified, South East Employers will commence work with a minimum of 30 Barnet Councillors on their PDPs from April 2023.

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 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.
- 5.6.3 Requirement of Charter Plus 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.

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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 6.6 Constitution & General Purposes Committee, 6th October 2022, Item 13 (Member Development Programme 2022-26): [Member Development and Induction Programme 2022-2026.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#).