

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 October 2020

GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Report of the Chairman of the Member Development Working Group

Report on the activities of the Member Development Working Group

1. Purpose of the Report

The terms of reference of the Committee, as detailed in Article 11 of the Council's Constitution, set out that the Committee should receive regular reports from the Member Development Working Group on its work and activities around member development and training. This should be a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

2. Information and Analysis

The main focus of the Working Group's activities during 2020 has been:

(a) The Member Development Strategy

Effective Member development is integral to achieving the Council's ambition and priorities. The strategy aims to provide clear direction and purpose in respect of learning and development in order to achieve:

- Motivated and skilled Members of the Council
- A consistent approach to Member learning and development
- Equality of opportunity
- Well-equipped Members who are confident and able to carry out their roles effectively

The Strategy therefore, sets out a planned approach to how the Council will support its Members and provide them with learning and development opportunities to embrace challenges and assist them in effectively fulfilling their individual, collective and community roles.

The Council recognises that it is essential to support, develop and encourage its Members and that continuous development is vital to ensure that Members update their knowledge and learn new skills to enable them to play an effective role in local government. The Strategy sets out the Council's objectives for Member learning and development and how those objectives will be achieved.

The Strategy has been developed through the Member Development Working Group and in consultation with Members from across all groups. Each political group has identified a Group Member Development Champion and the Chairman of the Member Development Working Group will undertake the role of Member Development Champion for the whole Council. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services has responsibility for Member Development and is a member of the Working Group and acts as the Member Development Champion within Cabinet. Member Development is now a standing item on the agenda of political group meetings.

As Member's will be aware, the Strategy was formally adopted by Full Council at its meeting held on 16 September 2020 and work is under way to implement the necessary actions in order to gain Member Development Charter accreditation. This work will include the activities detailed below.

(b) Derbyshire Learning Online (DLO)

Options for the 'architecture' of an elected Members only area have been considered by MDWG and a preferred model has been agreed. The Members area will create a 'one stop shop' for Member Development courses and resources including the Skills Matrix. Work is now underway to develop content and enable DLO to 'go live' as soon as possible now the Strategy has been adopted. Further developments will be on-going to develop and update content. Training on accessing and using the Member area will be developed and offered to all Members.

(c) Member Development Skills Matrix

The agreed Skills Matrix will be made available to elected Members via the Members area of DLO. It identifies the 'core' skills and knowledge, including specific development that is mandatory, as relevant to the different Member roles. It will provide the template for Member Development Plans, support the Training Needs Discussion (TND) process and inform the 2021 Post-election Induction design. Additional development opportunities, not defined within the skills matrix, will be made available as and when appropriate.

(d) Training Needs Discussion

As part of the implementation of the Strategy, Members will be offered an annual TND. TNDs will be facilitated by trained officers from within Democratic Services and Learning & Development. Facilitator training will be developed, officers/facilitators identified and trained so they can offer and undertake TNDs with Members. The Skills Matrix will be a key tool against which the current and aspirational training needs of Members will be identified. It will be particularly important in the period following the 2021 County Council elections when it will be essential that the training needs of all Members are captured.

(e) Pre and post Election Induction

A key element of the Strategy is the development of effective pre and post-election induction for Members.

In terms of pre-election induction, the Working Group is currently working on enhancing the existing information provided to potential candidates on the Council's website. Plans are also in hand to include a number of case studies of current county councillors under the themes: 'Day in the life' and 'Why I became a county councillor'. A video is also being produced to explain what the work of a county councillor entails.

The Working Group is also overseeing the development of a post-election induction programme. Taking on board the feedback from the Member Development Day held in February 2020, the intention is to develop a programme which is flexible and best meets the differing needs of Members.

(f) Elected Member Well-being Pulse Survey

As Members will be aware the Council has recently undertaken a Pulse Survey of Members which followed a similar exercise for officers. The purpose is to capture the experiences of Members as they fulfilled their Council duties in Covid lockdown conditions. The results are being considered by MDWG, and this will identify areas where the Council can offer greater support to elected Members in discharging their role going forward.

3. Legal Considerations

None.

4. Other considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors have also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport consideration.

5. Background Papers

Member Development Strategy.

6. Recommendations

To note the report.

Councillor G Musson

Chairman of the Member Development Working