

Non-Executive Report of the: General Purposes Committee 5 th July 2017	
Report of: Zena Cooke, Corporate Director, Resources Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Member Learning & Development	

Originating Officer(s)	Heather Daley, Divisional Director of HR & Transformation, Stuart Young, Interim HR, OD & Transformation Manager Beverley McKenzie, Head, Members Support
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Summary

This report updates Members on plans to extend the range of learning & development opportunities and establish a Member Learning & Development Working Group.

Recommendations:

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the current Member development offer detailed at Appendix 1.
2. Agree that the October General Purposes Committee receive a report bringing forward the outcome of a review of Member learning and development.
3. Nominate Members to be a part of the review.
4. Agree access to the development events currently provided for officers as detailed at Appendix 2.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The current Member learning & development offer would benefit from review including access to a new e-learning platform.
- 1.2 Member involvement in the design of learning & development activities will ensure that learning & development needs are identified and appropriately provided for.
- 1.3 Work on the revised programme needs to commence shortly so that it is in place in good time for the new municipal year.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Alternatively, Members could retain the current learning & development provision, or seek a third party to provide development activities.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The current Member learning & development offer provides a foundation for the knowledge and skills required for Councillors fulfilling their role. Work has been carried out over the spring and summer to review the officer learning & development offer. Members would benefit from a similar review to make the best use of resources. The current Member Development offer is summarised at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 A survey of Member development was carried out earlier in the year. 22 responses were received and these provide a good base upon which a review might be commenced. The survey suggested that in addition to some knowledge topics, Members prioritised the development of some core skills, including Media Relations, Dealing with Challenging People, Public Speaking and Chairing skills.
- 3.3 Assessing learning & development needs will form a key part of the review to ensure that development activities are aligned. This will provide the best experience for Members investing their time in attending courses, events, briefings and accessing online resources.
- 3.4 A recent review of learning & development for staff has created role profiles against which development can be tailored. It is proposed to adopt the same approach for Councillors. This can be best achieved by understanding the learning & development needs of Members and it is proposed to form a working group . The terms of reference for the Group are attached at Appendix 3.
- 3.5 Proposals for a refreshed Member learning & development programme will be brought back to the October GP Committee with a view to commencing services in January 2018. In the meantime the current Member offer will

continue. It is also proposed to open up Member access to a range of learning & development currently available to officers. These are provided both online and through office-based settings. Where the provision is office-based these sessions will be provided as Member only sessions. A proposed list is attached at Appendix 2.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 The current Medium Term Financial Strategy assumes a reduction in council wide learning and development costs and proposes a focused provision through a new learning and development plan and significant emphasis on e-learning provision. All costs for Member learning & development will be contained within the existing funding envelope so that no further financial implications arise from this report.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 A core principle of Good Governance is developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective as effective local government relies on public confidence in authority members, whether elected or appointed, and in officers. It is therefore important that arrangements exist for identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, and that these are supported by appropriate training.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the Standards Advisory Committee has a role in overseeing elements of Member Training specifically on matters relating to the Code of Conduct for Members and ethical governance.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Member development already provides support on diversity and inclusion. This offer will be supplemented by the courses at Appendix 1.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A review of Member learning and development should better align the roles of Councillors to the provision available. Better targeting of development activities should provide more benefit to Members participating in learning & development.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 There are no specific implications for a Greener Environment arising from this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Effective learning and development provides a foundation for Councillors in the fulfilment of their role. Development is particularly important to mitigate

risk following elections because newly elected Councillors are likely to have a steeper learning curve.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications for crime & disorder arising from this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Current Member Development courses
- Appendix 2 – Officer courses available to Councillors
- Appendix 3 – Draft terms of reference for Working Group on Member Development

Officer contact details for documents:

- Stuart Young, Interim HR, OD & Transformation Manager, 020 7364 5918
- Beverley McKenzie, Head, Members Support, 020 7364 4872

Appendix 1 Current Member Development

Workshop Schedule	
Proposed Date	Workshop Name
03-May-17	Ethics Probity- postponed
15-May-17	Tall Buildings
16-May-17	Waste Workshop
17-May-17	Tall Buildings
24-May-17	Ethics Probity - postponed
01-Jun-17	Consultation on a Development Viability SPD: Seminar
12-Jun-17	Development / Strategic Development Committee – Mandatory
13-Jun-17	Waste workshop
20-Jun-17	Waste Workshop
29-Jun-17	Draft Local Plan briefing post regulation 18
04-Jul-17	Waste Workshop
06-Jul-17	Draft Local Plan briefing post regulation 18
13-Sep-17	Ethics Probity
02-Oct-17	Ethics Probity
25th Jul to 28Jul	ASB Follow up
12-Dec-17	ASB Follow up
Before 8th June 2017	Viability SPD
late June/Early July-3rd (6-8pm) july/28th jun oe 29th june (5-7pm)	Advanced Chairing Skills working with Heather Wills, LGA
Before 29 June	SPD Viability Seminar
TBD	Social Media Training
11-Nov-16	Youth Services Update

Appendix 2 Office-based Development Opportunities for Councillors

Equalities & Diversity
Time Management
Communication Skills
Health & Safety Awareness
Personal Safety
ICT training – excel, word, powerpoint
Mental Health awareness
Safeguarding
Data Protection

Appendix 3 - Terms of Reference for Member Development Working Group

The Member Development Working Group will ensure strategic overview, planning and evaluation of all learning and development activities for Members and raise awareness and commitment to learning and development for all Members.

Each Political group will identify leads for learning and development. They will be responsible for promoting learning and development within their political groups; maximising learning opportunities for Members; working with group leadership on monitoring attendance at mandatory and other learning and development sessions, and for providing feedback to officers and Working Group members on development issues emerging at group level.

1. Membership of the Group shall be drawn from Tower Hamlets elected Members, as Group Leads for learning & development and the appropriate Council officers. Contributions may be sought from other boroughs, partners and specialist training organisations.
2. The Group shall review the current Member Development offer, receive examples of good practice and bring forward proposals for General Purposes Committee to consider.
3. The Group shall consider how best to assess learning & development needs for elected Members.
4. A range of techniques and learning styles can be used for development. The Group shall consider the appropriate range for Tower Hamlets and assist officers in the design of induction learning & development opportunities.
5. The Group shall consider how best to evaluate the effectiveness of learning activities both for the individual Councillor and for the programme as a whole. The Group shall bring forward recommendations for GP Committee to consider.