

<b>Committee(s)</b> Civic Affairs Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee	<b>Date:</b> 18 July 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Member Development and Training	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>Up to £11,000</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>Civic Affairs Contingency</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Greg Moore, Assistant Town Clerk	

### Summary

This report provides the Sub-Committee with an update in respect of Member Development and Training issues. Having absorbed the responsibility of the previous Members' Privileges Sub-Committee, the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee's remit incorporates oversight of the Member Development Steering Group. This informal body provides guidance on the Member Induction and Development programmes and supports in the development of the ongoing Member Development Strategy. The current Strategy is now expiring and a new, dedicated Member Services Officer, with significant experience in the area of Member Development, has been recruited. With their support, it is intended to bring forward a modernised and refreshed Strategy for consideration, incorporating feedback from the recent new Member induction programme particularly, and the Sub-Committee's views are also sought in respect of a refresh of the Steering Group's membership, so as to incorporate more effectively a diverse range of views and experiences.

Further, given the Sub-Committee's responsibilities in respect of Member conduct, there are associated issues in relation to training for which the Sub-Committee has a locus. The current annual allocation in respect of the Member Training budget is relatively minimal for such a large body of Members (£9k) and this, accordingly, presents significant limitations on what can be delivered meaningfully to help the development of Members. This report, therefore, also seeks the Sub-Committee's views on the potential for this budget to be supplemented from the Civic Affairs contingency fund, so as to support an improved offering.

### Recommendations

The Sub-Committee is asked to:-

1. Endorse the proposal to develop a new Member Development Strategy and the intention to present revised proposals in respect of the composition of the Member Development Steering Group.
2. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Chief Commoner, to consider ad hoc requests in respect of attendance at events or training sessions, until the new Member Development Strategy is in place.
3. Provisionally allocate up to £11,000 from the Sub-Committee's contingency fund to support the Member training offering, with approval of specific training courses and associated draw-down delegated to Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Chief Commoner.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Civic Affairs Sub-Committee has absorbed the previous remit of the Members' Privileges Sub-Committee, which had general responsibilities in respect of the Member development and training programme.
2. Whilst Member Development Strategies have previously been in place, it is fair to say that the level of support available to Members has been relatively limited, with historically low budget provision. This was recognised within the Target Operating Model process, where a bid was made and approved for a dedicated Member Services Officer, who might provide dedicated support the development and delivery of a more cohesive Member Development offering, utilising best practice from across the Member Services arena.

### **Member Development Strategy**

3. The existing Member Development Strategy has expired and, accordingly, it is now necessary to produce a new Strategy in support of the future provision of Member Development activity.
4. The Governance and Member Service Team has, this year, introduced a new, dedicated Member Services Officer post, recognising that this is an important role that requires continuous focus. The new post has been recruited to and the new postholder joins the Team on 18 July 2022, coming highly recommended and from a Member Services background at another London Borough. Once in post, it is intended that their expertise can be brought to bear in producing a first draft of a new Strategy, for Members' further review and contributions.
5. The Member Development Steering Group should, as they have in previous years, be involved closely in the re-drafting of this document, with the aim of producing and overseeing a learning and development strategy that is relevant to, and continues to meet the needs of, all Members who perform an important role within a unique organisation. Good practice dictates that effective Members' learning and development programmes are those that are informed by Members themselves, and the election to the Court of a large new cohort of Members adds additional impetus to the need to capture and reflect the evolving needs of the Court.
6. The membership of the Member Development Steering Group has, hitherto, been loosely defined and operates on a very informal basis, effectively limited to utilising the expertise of those who had expressed a particular interest in the subject. However, Officers are of the view that this could be more helpfully set out, such that the composition is more reflective of the Court as a whole.
7. By way of example, it is suggested that some spaces should be reserved for newly-elected Members, and some for longer standing Members, to ensure that the spectrum of experience on the Court is recognised. Similarly, it is suggested that it might also be valuable to encourage Aldermanic representation, as there has been an historic gap in representation on this Group. Whilst recognising that the Aldermen do have some differing training and induction requirements due to the slightly different nature of their roles, there is still much common ground to cover.

8. An important aspect of the new Strategy will be incorporating feedback from the Member Induction programme of briefings, which has taken place between April and July 2022. The programme of events offered was informed by the views of the Member Development Steering Group and, as this programme now draws to a close, it would be an opportune time to gather feedback on the offering not only from our 38 newly-elected Members but, also, from any returning Members who also took advantage of the programme given that, on this occasion, it was open to all. This feedback will help further inform and feed into the longer-term, new Member Development Strategy and help identify future member development needs. It will, naturally, also be important in looking ahead to the next Common Council elections in 2025, in order to inform the offering to newly-elected Members at that time.

### **Member Training**

9. A key constituent element of Member Development is training. However, the current budget to cover training costs for Members is just £9,000, which seems uncharitably modest for such a large membership and presents significant limitations in terms of Court-wide training and development opportunities.
10. In terms of cost effectiveness, it is recognised that more could be done in terms of in-house training and development offerings; however, the current pressures on available staffing resource (and, in particular, the Human Resources department) mean that this option is significantly curtailed at the current time.
11. However, steps have been taken to ensure that “City People”, the online hub utilised by City Corporation staff, is also accessible by Members and offers a host of useful online training modules on a variety of different topics. This could provide an opportunity, for example, for the Member Development Steering Group to select regular themes to ‘champion’ (e.g., wellbeing, EDI, leadership, etc.), highlighting all the courses available and encouraging fellow Members to undertake this training within the coming period. To raise awareness of this offering, a launch/drop-in session with details of how to access this offering and the range of courses available would be a helpful kick-start to this approach and is being planned for early September.
12. It is also suggested that the Steering Group, in developing the training element of its Strategy, may wish to give consideration to exploiting opportunities to target large groups of Members more effectively; for instance, arranging sessions immediately before or after meetings of the Court of Common Council might assist in maximising attendance.
13. However, notwithstanding the opportunities for in-house training, there will almost inevitably always be a requirement for external provision in respect of particular areas.
14. One particular consideration is the process by which elected Members’ requests to attend non-City Corporation training events are determined. For instance, an individual Member may identify a specific external training course that fulfils a particular development need for them; however, whilst wanting to support individual Members to maximise their potential for the benefit of the organisation, there will clearly be competing demand for the limited available budget, and so a consistent, transparent, and fair process will be necessary in managing such requests.

15. Given that it is likely that some such requests may be submitted in the interim period until the new Strategy is in place, it is suggested that ad hoc requests be considered by the Chair and Chief Commoner, together with the Town Clerk.
16. It should also be noted that, in the absence of in-house training provision in the immediate future, there are likely to be requirements for externally-facilitated training. In particular, a number of suggestions have been made in respect of areas where there is a more pressing need to offer support, such as:-
  - Managing conflict in the workplace
  - Having difficult conversations
  - Leading through Change
  - Leading diverse and inclusive teams
  - Microaggressions
17. In order to facilitate the provision of these and other training offerings, provision for additional budget allocation is sought from within the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee's contingency pot. An allocation of up to £11,000 would bring the total available budget to £20,000 (equivalent to £160 per Member). Any draw-down from within this allocation would be subject to the consent of the Chair and Chief Commoner and tied to the delivery of specific training / development opportunities.
18. Through the development of the new Member Development Strategy, it is intended that this strategy will have a more appropriately costed and programme-based budget, which will be presented for approval through the annual budget setting processes in the usual way.

### **Financial Implications**

19. See paragraph 17 above.

### **Equalities Implications**

20. Under the Equality Act 2010, all public bodies have a duty to ensure that when exercising their functions they have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and to take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people and encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. In producing a new Member Development Strategy, careful consideration will need to be given as to any potential impacts in this context.

### **Conclusion**

21. This report updates Members in respect of Member Development and Training arrangements and sets out an intended course of action to establish a more coherent, professional offering. The report also requests additional allocation of funds to support ongoing training and development in the interim.

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