

Committee(s): Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee	Date: 21 st July 2023
Subject: Member Learning and Development Strategy Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	All
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk and Chief Executive	For Discussion
Report author(s) June Haynes, Member Services Officer	

Summary

The Member Learning and Development Strategy sets out delivery plan for an ongoing, structured, rolling programme which aims to support all Members of the Court of Common Council in ensuring that they have access to opportunities to broaden their specialist knowledge and skills in relation to their duties.

The Strategy was reviewed and approved by the then-Member Development Steering Group at its last meeting and included proposals and initial thoughts for a communication and engagement approach, a budgeting/costings process, and ongoing reporting/monitoring of the programme. Given that the Steering Group has since been subsumed within the new Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee, with a reinvigorated membership, this report seeks to provide a precis of the Strategy's development and focus, together with an update on delivery against it since your last meeting.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report and to provide any feedback or direction in respect of the forward learning and development programme and such additional / alternative offerings as they see fit.

Main Report

Background

1. At its meeting on 18 July 2022, the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee agreed to endorse a refresh of the expired Member Learning and Development (L&D) Strategy, incorporating the views of a remodelled Member Learning and Development Steering Group (MLDSG), whose main objective was to deliver a rolling Member L&D programme. The responsibilities of this Steering Group have now been incorporated within the remit of the new Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee.

2. The MLDSG, at what transpired to be its final meeting, approved a Member Learning and Development Strategy which included a rolling programme of training and development activities that it considered appropriate, timely, and which provided value for money.
3. It was agreed that any ongoing Member Learning and Development Programme should make use of the opportunities and expertise already available in-house. Not only would this allow for greater tailoring of L&D activities to reflect the Corporation's sometimes unique arrangements, but it would also provide for a more comprehensive yet cost-effective approach. Therefore, in the period prior to the formal approval of the, the additional capacity had allowed the Governance and Member Services Team to begin to actively seek out relevant offers of training from internal and external sources. These have all been responded to and, where taken up, advertised to all relevant Members. Attendance has been captured and individual training records have been adopted. The recording of training sessions is also now routine, where possible, to promote accessibility and value for money, and to allow Members to revisit previous learning sessions for refresher purposes.
4. In producing the Strategy, due consideration was given to the experiences of newly appointed Members of Court and their comments on the induction programme. However, there are references throughout to discrete induction training, as this must continue to be arranged for any Members appointed following by-elections necessitated by casual vacancies arising throughout the four-year election term. It was also considered important to establish what was to be delivered as part of the induction programme, so that Members were cited on when to expect these elements of training and understand why these were not included in the rolling programme for the broader Membership.
5. The rolling programme does not explicitly list all training/induction requirements and offerings that Members should have access to upon appointment to specific Committees. This will continue to be provided by the relevant Chief Officer(s) in conjunction with the Committee Clerk on an ongoing basis.
6. The programme operates on a thematic basis, informed by Member feedback and as approved; however, broader training continues to be delivered notwithstanding the general thematic strand, as and when opportunities arise. By way of reminder, those themes are currently as below, based on a quarterly schedule aligning with the civic year. In addition to the below themes, a suggestion has been made that it might be beneficial to add a specific statutory training theme, with all Members afforded the opportunity to undertake requisite licensing and planning training, so as to allow them to discharge their duties in this respect should the need arise and committee memberships change unexpectedly or at short notice.

2023/24	Theme/Focus
Q1	Leadership Skills
Q2	Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Q3	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Q4	Data and Information
2024/25	
Q1	Leadership Skills
Q2	Health, Safety & Wellbeing
Q3	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7. In the interests of completeness, the Strategy is available to view at Appendix 1.

Q1 Activity Update

8. Early Quarter 1 activity was somewhat limited in view of the Easter break and subsequent appointments to committees in late April / early May, with focus instead diverted to the creation of a digital Member Portal (reported on separately), following the ambition set by the MDSG at its last meeting.

9. Nevertheless, discrete training sessions were delivered in respect of:

- *Charitable Responsibilities and Obligations*: this training, delivered by specialist charity law firm Bates Wells, was intended to support the City Corporation and its Members in meeting charity trustee duties and delivering on Members' leadership obligations as Trustees. It sought to provide Members with an overview of charity law essentials, as well as information on the role of the Charity Commission and key legislation and regulation. Alderman Alison Gowman, past Chair of the City Bridge Trust and with extensive experience as a charity trustee on multiple bodies, kindly led the Q&A at the end. The session was well-attended with positive feedback; it was also recorded and has been added to the digital library to allow for those unable to attend to access it (or for those in attendance to use for refresher purposes).
- *Committee Participation Skills*: this training, delivered by the Local Government Association, is intended to provide all Members to participate effectively, collegiately, and constructively, in decision-making, whether as a Member of the Committee or as Chair.
- *Barbican Podium Planning*: In response to requests for training in respect of this complicated area which affects different facets of the City Corporation's committee structure and decision-making, a session was delivered to help Members understand the particular issues at play and assist them in discharging their duties as elected Members.
- *Community Infrastructure Levy funding*: in view of the particular nuances associated with this particular funding stream, training was offered to Members to help them understand the parameters within which this fund can be applied and their responsibilities in managing such monies and determining expenditure.

10. In addition, a series of briefing sessions took place over the period, either for specific committees or for the broader membership as appropriate, covering issues such as:-

- Material Planning Considerations
- Electronic voting familiarisation sessions
- The Barbican Estate Office Review
- The LocalMotion programme (a BHE funding initiative)
- The Economic and Cyber Crime landscape/ecosystem
- A visit and briefing on Billingsgate Market
- Reward Refresh programme Design Principles

Member Portal

11. As well as highlighting training on a quarterly basis via email, the MDSG were supportive of proposals to deliver a new 'Member Portal' – i.e., a dedicated Member Resource page on the City Corporation intranet. It is intended that this portal will not only allow Members to find out about training opportunities and book onto courses, but also operate as a 'one-stop shop' for the dissemination of a large volume of Member-related material, including committee lunch booking forms, quarterly financial support scheme submissions, links to key contacts, news releases, IT updates, meeting information, outside body vacancy listings, etc. The intention, once the portal is fully established, is to set it as the default 'homepage' on Members' City devices, so it does not require any additional effort on the Members' part to gain access and information can be tailored and presented intelligently to Members to provide a smoother and more efficient Member support service. This approach has the support of the Director of Digital Information and Technology.
12. Colleagues in the IT section kindly agreed to develop the architecture for this proposition following the MDSG's approval and, since the last meeting, have worked to develop this offering. A presentation demonstrating this resource will be provided to Members elsewhere on today's agenda.

Measurement and Analysis

13. It will be crucial to monitor and measure delivery to ensure not only the appropriate use of resources, but to allow us to take forward learnings for the future. There is a commitment to this within the Strategy, and we plan to deliver against this by reporting quarterly on the following metrics:
- Course offerings for the previous quarter;
 - Course attendance figures;
 - Qualitative feedback for individual courses;
 - Budget and cost updates.
15. The first qualitative update report will be presented to the next meeting of your Sub-Committee, once data for Q1 has been assessed.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

Strategic Implications:

16. The profile of the L&D function, both internally and externally, demonstrates Members' commitment to ensuring that they have the relevant skills to deliver on all areas of the City's Corporate Plan, including the ambitions to embrace best practice and to deliver on value for money requirements, and to support individuals to promote and cultivate communities within the organisation and amongst the City's resident population.

Financial Implications:

17. There is an annual budget allocation of £9k made by the City Corporation for Member Learning and Development. The Civic-Affairs Sub-Committee, noting that this was significantly lower sum than that allocated by other local authorities, agreed to committed a further £11k (via the Policy Contingency fund) which has been transferred to this Sub-Committee for the coming financial year. This provides a total of £20k for Member Learning and Development opportunities in the coming period.

Resource Implications

18. Additional resources have been put in place with the appointment of a dedicated Member Services Officer as of August 2022 who is responsible for ensuring that the objectives are met. This has helped to draw together a team of officers across departments who are collectively responsible for the Member Learning and Development offer.

Risk Implications

19. The success of the Member Learning and Development Programme is reliant on the level of Member engagement. If the offer is not sufficiently appropriate or engaging, the objectives will not be met. If successful, the delivery of the Strategy ought to help mitigate against corporate risks across the organisation, with Members being better equipped to discharge their various responsibilities.

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. The proposals contained in this report do not have any potential negative impact on a particular group of people based on their protected characteristics. Instead, the strategy will ensure that the programme is accessible to all Members and would accommodate those requiring support to ensure that all delegates have the same opportunities. Where possible, reasonable adjustments will be made to allow equality of access.

Climate Implications:

21. There are no climate implications arising from this report.

Security Implications:

22. There are no security implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

23. This report presents an update on the delivery to-date of the new Member Learning and Development Strategy and invites Members' thoughts and reflections on alterations or additions that might be made to the rolling programme moving forwards.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Member Learning and Development Strategy 2023-2025

Contact:

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