MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS SUB COMMITTEE
Monday, 23 February 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development and Standards Sub Committee held at COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL on Monday, 23 February 2026 at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:
Deputy Henry Pollard (Chair)
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Deputy Chair)
Deputy Jaspreet Hodgson
Sandra Jenner
Naresh Hari Sonpar
Philip Woodhouse

Officers:

Polly Dunn	-	Assistant Town Clerk
Isaac Thomas	-	Town Clerk's Department
Edward Wood	-	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department

The Chairman informed Members that Tim McNally had made the decision to step down from the Sub-Committee. The Chairman recorded thanks on behalf of the Sub-Committee for Mr McNally's contribution and service over a significant period of time and noted that he had left the Committee to pursue other areas of interest.

1. **APOLOGIES**
Apologies were received from Alderman Alison Gowman, Deputy Christopher Hayward and Deputy James Thomson.

2. **MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
There were no declarations.

3. **PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**
The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk providing an opportunity to consider the Sub-Committee's terms of reference and decide whether any changes were required in time for the annual re-appointment, composition and terms of reference of Sub-Committees review to be undertaken by Policy and Resources Committee.

A Member noted that item (e), which referenced the 'Director of HR,' should be updated to 'Chief People Officer' to reflect the revised title of the role. The Sub-Committee agreed that this update should be made to the Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED, that the terms of reference of the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee were approved subject to a minor amendment.

5. **MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Town Clerk providing an overview of ad hoc Member Learning and Development activity delivered during Quarters 3 and 4 of 2025/26, including updated attendance records as previously requested. The Sub-Committee also considered the forthcoming quarterly training theme for Apri-June 2026, which will focus on Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI).

Members noted that the views of the EEDI Sub-Committee had been sought at its meeting on 18 February 2026, enabling its Members to provide input in their capacity as subject matter experts on the upcoming EEDI theme. Officers had requested input on desired outcomes, strategic priorities, knowledge or confidence gaps, statutory responsibilities, and potential reputational or governance risks.

Key points arising from that discussion were reported as follows:

- Support was expressed for incorporating a light-touch mandatory element to the training in the form of a module on Members' statutory responsibilities, with particular emphasis on duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The EEDI Sub-Committee supported the introduction of a short baseline training needs survey to assess Members' confidence levels and development priorities, moving towards a more Member-led approach. It was suggested that this be framed as a governance and capability self-assessment rather than a formal 'training needs analysis' to encourage engagement.
- Members highlighted priority topics on City Belonging, unconscious bias, and the City Corporation's historical links to the transatlantic slave trade.
- The introduction of a light-touch annual appraisal process for Chairs and Deputy Chairs was proposed, to support role effectiveness and identify development needs.
- Emphasis was placed on engagement and reach, such as promoting training through the Members' Portal, the Chief Commoner's Monthly Bulletin, and the role of Ward Deputies in engaging with their fellow Ward Members to inform and advertise training.

The Sub-Committee discussed the inclusion of a mandatory training element within the EEDI theme and was supportive of strongly recommending a module focused on Members' statutory and legal obligations. Officers confirmed that mandatory training on the Members' Code of Conduct was delivered to and successfully completed by all Members of the Court as part of the 2025 Member Induction and Refresher Programme. This training included guidance on equalities considerations and Members' responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. With this in mind, the Sub-

Committee resolved that the upcoming course on legal obligations should be strongly recommended, rather than mandatory.

Members considered mechanisms for identifying and responding to training needs. Views were mixed on issuing a formal survey in advance of the EEDI quarter, with some concerns expressed regarding officer capacity and the risk of over-engineering the process. Several Members favoured a simpler annual check-in framed around learning and development, rather than an explicit training needs assessment.

Members raised the possibility of undertaking a skills audit of the full Court to better tailor training provision. Officers advised that a Skills and Experience form currently exists, primarily used by the Remembrancer's Department for events and invitational purposes.

Referring to the training log and evaluation at Appendix 1, Members supported retaining attendance records for internal value-for-money monitoring. The Sub-Committee discussed whether attendance data should be broken down further (for example, by Aldermen and Common Councillors) and whether personalised training logs could be publicised. Officers indicated that a breakdown of Aldermen and Commoners was feasible but noted that, given the differing group sizes (25 Aldermen and 100 Common Councillors), proportional participation would need to be reflected to ensure fair comparison. Officers reiterated that the primary purpose of internal monitoring is to support Members in their City Corporation roles.

Members also supported the introduction of a post-session evaluation form to assess the impact and effectiveness of training. Officers confirmed that this could be provided for future courses.

A Member emphasised that training success should not be measured solely by attendance numbers, but also by whether the appropriate Members were attending relevant sessions and deriving value from them. Targeting training to those most in need of specific development areas was considered more meaningful than maximising overall attendance. It was also recognised that many Members undertake professional training in their external roles. Internal provision should therefore remain focused on the specific context and responsibilities of being an effective City Corporation Member.

Concern was expressed regarding low attendance at some sessions. Members emphasised the importance of leadership in encouraging participation. The Chair, also the Chief Commoner, reaffirmed his commitment to promoting training through his Monthly Bulletin and the Members' Portal, and to engaging Ward Deputies in supporting take-up. A Member reported difficulty locating training recordings on the Members' Portal and officers confirmed some recordings had expired, but that these would be reinstated.

The Sub-Committee was supportive of introducing an annual assessment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs, noting that continuous development is relevant at all levels of

experience and that an appraisal process would support effectiveness and accountability in leadership roles.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Noted the report and the attendance data set out at Appendix 1.
- Noted the revised timing and development approach for the EEDI quarterly training theme and discuss training content for Quarter 1 of 2026.
- Provided feedback on the monitoring and reporting of training.

6. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE**
There were no questions.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**
Two items of additional business were raised:

7.1 **Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge: Supplemental Report**

The Sub-Committee was invited to discuss the observations set out in the LGA Peer Challenge feedback report, which provided feedback on the City Corporation's local authority services. The Chair highlighted that it was a positive and constructive peer review.

A Member drew attention to the peer review recommendations, observing that while several themes (such as governance, housing engagement, and finance) were being progressed in other Committees, Recommendation 3, which concerned improving effective working between Members and officers, was directly relevant to this Sub-Committee. Officers advised that work was already underway within the Governance & Member Services team to progress relevant actions.

Concerns were also raised about difficulties identifying the correct officers to contact, particularly for newer Members. Members highlighted that there were areas of the organisation where it was unclear who held responsibility for particular areas of work, which was compounded by the absence of up-to-date organisational charts and by officers' contact details not always being readily available. Related frustration was expressed regarding redundant landline numbers that were no longer monitored. Members were encouraged by officers to flag incorrect or obsolete contact details when found so that they could be corrected.

Members were also reminded that, pending wider improvements, contacting the relevant Chief Officer or seeking advice from fellow Members or Committee Chairs remained the most effective route where responsibility was unclear. Officers acknowledged the challenges raised and highlighted upcoming improvements linked to the new SAP HR and organisational structure system, which would help clarify reporting lines and responsibilities. Members were assured that their comments would be fed into the ongoing governance improvement work.

A question was raised regarding whether there was any trend or change in the volume of complaints arising in Member-officer relations, and whether the Sub-Committee should consider if any further action was needed. Officers advised that they could not

provide exact figures, nothing that while formal complaints were reported annually to this Sub-Committee, Policy & Resources Committee, and the Court of Common Council, many issues were also resolved informally, either by Chief Officers handling Member-officer matters, or through the Chief Commoner's pre-complaints mitigation process for Member-on-Member matters. Members were reminded that, where a Member wished to raise a concern about an officer, this should be directed to the relevant Director or Chief Officer of that service.

7.2 **Ad Hoc Training Session on Emergency Planning**

The Town Clerk enquired whether Members would be interested in a briefing session being held on emergency planning, major incident response, and the Member role. The Sub-Committee responded positively, noting that it would help Members respond to stakeholder queries.

8. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**
RESOLVED, That - under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

9. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

10. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**
There were no questions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
No other business was raised.

The meeting ended at 3.08 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Isaac Thomas, Member Services Officer
isaac.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk