

CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee was held on Thursday 27 June 2024.

PRESENT: Councillors J Rostron (Chair), J Ewan (Vice-Chair), N Walker, G Wilson, I Morrish, J Young, I Blades and P Storey

OFFICERS: C Benjamin, J McNally, A Wilson and N Finnegan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

24/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point of the meeting.

24/2 **MINUTES OF THE CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

The minutes of the Constitution and Members Development Committee held on 30 November 2023 were submitted and approved as a true record.

24/3 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE CHANGES**

The Head of Human Resources presented a report to the Constitution and Members' Development Committee, the report sought approval to amend the Terms of Reference for Works Council and the Staff Appeal Committee.

Members were advised that following advice from the Local Government Association (LGA) and in line with best practice it was proposed to change the Terms of Reference for Works Council and Staff Appeal Committee to reflect that a Member cannot sit on both committees in order to have a clear separation of roles. Having a good separation of roles in place was good practice in local government and had been suggested by the Chair of the Improvement Board following feedback from the LGA.

Members heard that if the proposed changes were to be agreed the following statements would be added to the current Terms of Reference for Works Council and Staff Appeal Committee:

- Works Council – Members of Works Council are prohibited from being a Member on Staff Appeal Committee.
- Staff Appeal Committee – Members of Staff Appeal Committee are prohibited from being a Member on Works Councils.

The proposed changes would promote good governance insofar as they avoid any conflict or perceived conflict of interest, in respect of the possible crossover of business between Works Council and Staff Appeal Committee.

Members were asked to agree to the following recommendations:

- Approves the changes to the Terms of Reference of the Works Council and the Staff Appeals Committee and recommends full Council approves the changes as follows:

- Works Council – Members of Works Council are prohibited from being a member on Staff Appeal Committee.
- Staff Appeal – Members of Staff Appeal Committee are prohibited from being a member on works Council.

Agreed as follows:

That a report be submitted to full Council to seek approval to amend the Terms of Reference of Works Council and Staff Appeal Committee.

24/4

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WORKPLAN - DISCUSSION

The Head of Legal (People) attended the meeting to provide an update on the Member Development Strategy and to agree the next steps to improve engagement with Members.

The Member Development Strategy 2023-2027 was approved by Council on 29th November 2023.

The Strategy sets out our commitment to supporting Members with their continuous development, and details how we will equip Members with the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their roles effectively. It also covered how we would identify development needs; the ways in which Members could participate in continuous learning and development; and how we would evaluate and measure the success of all learning.

The Member Development Strategy aligns closely to the Council Plan and People Strategy to ensure all activities contribute to delivery of key commitments to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Members were advised that the key issue remains engaging members in their own development and the development of others to contribute to the improvements in culture that we are trying to achieve.

In order to improve engagement the next steps were proposed for the following six months:

- **Meeting with group leaders** to discuss: Launch of a skills audit; Promotion of the personal development plans; Review of the training programme offer; Identify any issues.
- Establish the member led **Communication and Member Resources Working Group**, which included in the draft terms of reference 'To identify what, particularly online, resources may be provided to members to assist them in carrying out their role'.
- Review of **induction offer to new members** to identify how we can better deliver the induction training of any new members post the main round of elections as it doesn't lend itself easily to be delivered to one person. This would include the introduction of a buddy system - allocated Democratic Services Officer and another member for settling in/enquiries.
- Carry out a **Members Skills Audit** to assist members to identify their own strengths and development areas, helping them to plan their development journey more effectively, and to use their skills to support other members/committees in their areas of expertise.

- Refresh of the offer of the **Personal Development Plan** via targeted communication with all members, with input from group leaders
- Review of **Training and Development Offer**. Following the skills audit, review of the offer sent to all members with all available training and development options - including both internal and external resource. To include an offer for members to indicate any courses/training that they require so that this can be sourced.

This would include a particular review of the standards and code of conduct training offer, particularly with regards to their use of social media, including liaison with the LGA for a bespoke training workshop.

- **Annual review** of Members Development Strategy by way of evaluating: training evaluation forms and other feedback received, feedback through committee groups and member meetings, 1-1 meetings, statistics on Councillor participation, annual Survey

Following discussions Members suggested that training should be offered at different times due to some Members working or having caring responsibilities. Members felt that training offered on Teams could increase attendance levels.

AGREED as follows: Members agreed to all of the suggested next steps to improve Member engagement.

24/5

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.