

## ITEM NO: 4

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	25 November 2014
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Sandra Stewart – Borough Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)
<b>SUBJECT MATTER:</b>	<b>ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT SUMMARY:</b>	The report outlines the progress that has been made around Elected Member Development provision and further changes moving forward.
<b>RECOMMENDATION(S):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It is proposed that the Member Development Forum continues in order to continue to give Elected Members the opportunity to steer the provision of training and development for Members and achieve good practice.</li><li>2. It is agreed that evaluations for Members and their Personal Development Plans (PDPs) are retained centrally to evaluate and inform future programmes and interventions.</li><li>3. It is proposed that alternatives to E-learning are explored for the learning and development of Elected Members within Tameside Council and opportunities for further development through partner organisations such as North West Employers are further utilised.</li><li>4. The budget for 2014/15 is supported and work begins on reviewing the strategy (2013 – 15 attached as <b>Appendix 1</b>) for the next two years.</li><li>5. That the report from the North West Employers Regional Development Committee (<b>Appendix 3</b>) congratulating and endorsing Tameside Council achieving the Level 1 Review of the Elected Member Development Charter is received and both Members and staff involved in achieving this are thanked for their hard work and commitment and note the suggestions which can be considered as part of the strategy review recommended in 4.</li></ol>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)	A budget for Member development is included within the Councils overall budget and any costs will be funded from this.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	It is critical to the success of the Borough and the effectiveness of the organisation that elected members are provided with sufficient support and training to develop the necessary skills in a very challenging environment. This is particularly difficult given the meagre budget together with the unfair criticism that is levelled at members when they do undertake training in the media.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT:</b>	Ensure that Elected Members are appropriately skilled and knowledgeable to support their communities.

**LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN:** Supports the delivery of the Community Strategy by Elected Members across the Borough.


**ACCESS TO INFORMATION:**

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

**This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.**

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report author, Alison Williams on:

 0161 342 2097

 [alison.williams@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:alison.williams@tameside.gov.uk)

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Elected Member Development report presented to Standards Committee in March 2013 identified the previous provision and future options for Elected Member Development within the Council. In addition to that report the Elected Member Development Strategy has also been developed to ensure that Elected Member Development remains important for the Council moving forward. The strategy will ensure that Elected Members are given the necessary opportunities, resources and time to continually develop their skills and knowledge accordingly within their roles.
- 1.2 The Member Development Annual Report details the achievements made during the last eighteen months following the new approach to the development of Elected Members being established. The report outlines the development courses, events and activities undertaken by elected Members over the course of the year.
- 1.3 As part of Elected Member Development within the Council a Forum has been re-established consisting of eight Elected Members with the Deputy Executive Leader as Chair. This Forum is instrumental in establishing, guiding and evolving the array of learning and development opportunities that are available to Members. The Forum, supported by two officers is essential for the Council maintaining the North West Employers Member Development Charter Award.

## **2.0 CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.1 Member Development is supported via Democratic Services and Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny. This supports both new and established Elected Members with their development needs. There is a standard package of support that is provided to all newly Elected Members on election via Democratic Services, this is then enhanced with any further development needed via Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny through the Elected Member Development Plan.
- 2.2 There are varying demands placed on Councillors who are expected to engage and undertake training and development to ensure they have the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge to continue to undertake their roles as Elected Members effectively.

## **3.0 DEVELOPMENTS- ANNUAL UPDATE**

### **Member Development Strategy**

- 3.1 It is important that we continue to provide a robust and flexible programme of development for Elected Members to ensure they continue to provide effective political leadership. It is essential that we find new and innovative ways of engaging and developing Elected Members as well as encouraging them to have confidence in the skills and experiences they already bring to the role and grow them further. This can be achieved through organised development sessions, the development of networking and mentoring, increased social media use and effective use of e-learning.
- 3.2 The Elected Member Development Strategy set out at **Appendix 1** recognises that in order for Tameside to embrace the period of austerity, Elected Members must be able to take on the challenges the Council will face with rigour. In order to be able to do this we need to ensure that our Members have the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge to deal with the changing and challenging environment.
- 3.3 The Council invests a great deal of time and resources into developing Elected Members within their roles, through a culture of on-going learning and continuous improvement. It is

recognised that not all learning will be mandatory for Elected Members and some discretion will be shown regarding attendance.

#### **Member Development Network**

3.4 The Member Development Network which was established in 1998 by North West Employers helps to support the learning and development of Elected Members across various councils in the North West. As part of its role, the Network helps facilitate the sharing of good practice, advice and highlights local and national drivers. The Network is open to both Members and officers who support and/or have an interest in Elected Member development.

3.5 Members will be offered the opportunities to attend sessions held by North West Employers throughout the course of the year. North West Employers provides a Councillor Development Programme that provides a range of different training and development opportunities that will be available throughout 2014/15. These courses range from Managing Casework and Community Engagement to policy updates.

#### **Members Charter**

3.6 The North West Charter for Elected Members was launched by North West Employers Organisation in 2000. The Charter is a declaration of commitment in supporting Elected Member Development, by having dedicated officers to assist all Elected Members in identifying their development needs. The Charter ensures that there is a strategy to meet learning and development needs at a localised level and that this is supported across the Council.

3.7 Tameside Council currently holds the Member Development Charter Level 1 and Level 2 Exemplar for Community Budgets. Level 1 is due for re-assessment in October 2014, with the Council striving to achieve a second Level 2 Exemplar in 2015 for its recent and ongoing work around Ward Walks and the refreshed Neighbourhood offer.

#### **Ward Walks**

3.8 Throughout 2013/14, Ward Walks have been undertaken by Elected Members supported by Senior Managers from within the Council. The aim of the Ward Walks was to give Members and officers the opportunity to work collaboratively in outlining the issues that are important to the Members within their wards and to their constituents. This allows the basis for further development and understanding using information from Corporate Performance around the wards and their associated Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) to inform the New Neighbourhood Offer whilst supporting learning and improvements.

3.9 Actions from all the Ward Walks will be continually monitored to ensure that progress and development is being made and recorded. This work will continue in 2014/15 and officers will continue to work closely with Members on the next round of ward walks. It is proposed that ward walks will take place over a day for each neighbourhood area, with the day concluding with all learning and improvements being recorded to take forward.

3.10 Feedback from the Ward Walks will be captured from all Members as part of the wider evaluation work on Elected Member Development.

3.11 Following feedback from the evaluation, the Ward Walks programme will be continually developed in order to capture further areas for learning and improvement. This learning will also help to develop the Member's wider skills, knowledge and understanding of emergent issues within wards.

#### **Member Development Sessions**

3.12 In order to work more effectively in this challenging climate, Member Development is working more closely with senior Elected Members, officers and project managers across

the Council to ensure that Members are involved in and kept up to speed with the ongoing changes to service delivery.

- 3.13 Instead of simply reacting to change and informing Members (i.e. through ad hoc seminars and briefings), officers are recognising the requirement to anticipate the impact and involve Members early in discussions. This will support Members by providing timely and appropriate learning and consultation at the earliest possible opportunities.

#### **Member Events**

- 3.14 This year the Member Development Forum established a variety of training programmes which are continually being monitored and evaluated over the course of the year. Working together with the Executive Members and officers within the Council, the Forum ensures that Member development reflects any new initiatives, changes to services and other priorities that are emerging within the council.
- 3.15 During the year 2013-14, the Elected Member Development sessions have addressed a range of different topics. The events have taken place throughout the year in the George Hatton Hall of Dukinfield Town Hall or at external partner locations. The events usually commence at 6pm and finish between 8.30pm and 9pm. The table below outlines the topics considered since the new training approach commenced in 2013/14.

<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Public Health Transfer to Local Authority	06/02/2013
Localised Council Tax Scheme	11/03/2013
Adult Safeguarding	25/06/2013
Welfare Reforms	22/07/2013
Making Every Contact Count	03/09/2013
Academies	20/11/2013
Waste Collection and Recycling	07/01/2014
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service	04/02/2014
Mental Wellbeing	11/03/2014
Chairing Skills	03/07/2013
	<b>Total</b>

- 3.16 Over the course of the Member Development Programme, an average of 30 Members have attended the Member Development sessions, with 90% (51) of our 57 Members having attended one or more of the training events.
- 3.17 Evaluation of the sessions has identified that the service area presenting needs to provide sufficient numbers of staff to facilitate the tables at the events. This ensures that the Members have the opportunity to raise any queries with a specific officer and to have optimum engagement from the Members. This also ensures Members get the most benefit from the events.
- 3.18 During 2014/15 a range of training and development sessions will be available for Members within the Borough. The proposed sessions that have been timetabled for Member Development for 2014/15 are shown in the table below.

<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sponsorship Training	13/08/2014
The Future Role of Local Councillors	09/09/2014
Budget Simulation	10/09/2014
Bin Swap	20/10/2014
District Assemblies and Neighbourhoods	TBC
Update – Child Sexual Exploitation	TBC
Integration of Health Services	13/11/2014

Greystones and the Women and their Children Centre	19/01/2015
Public Health	26/02/2015

- 3.19 Further events are being planned and these sessions will build on the already useful and insightful detail and learning that Members have already received during 2013/14 and the first part of 2014/15.
- 3.20 Continued feedback and evaluation from the Member Development Forum and Member events have proved effective in helping to outline areas for further improvements and development. They have also identified and informed future development events and training needs.
- 3.21 The feedback from all the evening session has been very positive and has confirmed that these types of sessions are well received by all Elected Members.
- 3.22 All Member Development training events undertaken during 2013/14 were evaluated immediately after delivery either at the event or electronically by email and feedback collated. This feedback has helped to shape and develop how future events are delivered and organised.
- 3.23 Members were asked to provide feedback to three standard set questions for each evening session to benchmark the content and quality of the session.
- 3.24 The responses received back, identified that on average:
- 92.4% of Members felt satisfied that the briefing sessions were 'clearly understandable'.
  - 87% of Members felt that the content was clear and relevant to their roles
  - 87% of Members felt satisfied they would be able to use the information provided to support them in their role as Councillor.

#### **Member Development Forum**

- 3.25 The Member Development Forum has met quarterly throughout the year. The Forum is chaired by Cllr John Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader). The Forum discusses Elected Member Development and ensures that the delivery plan is robust and flexible enough to accommodate emerging themes for both Members and the Council.
- 3.26 Membership of the Forum has changed for the year 2014/15 with the addition of two newly elected Members, Councillor Andy Kinsey and Councillor Paul Buckley. Membership of the forum for 2014/15 is as follows:
- Cllr John Taylor (Chair)
  - Cllr Dawson Lane
  - Cllr A Kinsey
  - Cllr P Buckley
  - Cllr C Reynolds
  - Cllr J Jackson
  - Cllr S Quinn
  - Cllr J Middleton
- 3.27 During the period 2013/14 the Member Development budget stood at £7,500 as set out in the table below. Given the significant activity planned within the Council during 2014/15 and beyond, the budget for 2014/15 has remained at the same level to ensure sufficient resource is available to fund additional training events, particularly in relation to the role of local councillors and sponsorship training.

- 3.28 The budget for Member Development Plan is used to finance all expenditure in relation to Member Development training throughout the period. The budget for 2013/14 was as outlined in the table below:

8 Essential Evening Events	£3200
4 Optional/emergent themed Evening Events	£1600
7 North West Employer Elected Member Development Events	£300
E-learning license for the Modern Councillor	£1000
Media Training	£1500
Total Cost for plan	£7500

- 3.29 The budget expenditure for 2014/15 is outlined in the table below.

8 Essential Evening Events	£3200
4 Optional/emergent themed Evening Events	£1600
7 North West Employer Elected Member Development Events	£1300
Sponsorship Training	£750
The Role of Future Councillors	£1100
Media Training	£1500
Total Cost for plan	£7500

- 3.30 Over the last year the Forum has focused specifically on ensuring a range of quality training and development sessions are developed and delivered for Members, which are being delivered largely through an increased number of in-house training events. Whilst these may be demanding of officer time, they can be carefully targeted on Members needs in the local context in which they work. This ensures that quality and focus can be assured through careful advance planning - and in most cases there are limited or no direct external related costs associated with the events.

#### **Bespoke learning and development**

- 3.31 Officers currently arrange bespoke workshops and briefings on legislative and other changes, casework issues and other service-specific matters. This has been successful over the previous eighteen months and will continue in the coming year.
- 3.32 During 2013/14 all Elected Members who held a chairing capacity within the Council, whether on a Panel, Committee or District Assembly were offered the opportunity to attend a chairing skills session provided by North West Employers shortly following the Annual business meeting when all appointments were made for the municipal Year. Two sessions were provided over a full day and involved interactive, practical and theory based skills on the effective chairing of meetings.
- 3.33 Social media is an extremely useful tool for Elected Members to enable them to keep in touch with their constituents as well as to keep abreast of developments and current issues within the Borough. In addition to this Social media can be used as an informative tool to bolster a Members Election campaign. Consequently, social media training was made available to those Members who were interested in learning details of the different and varied platforms (Facebook and Twitter) used in social media.
- 3.34 Social Media training will continue to be provided. This will assist those Members unfamiliar with the different social networks to register and use the alternative platforms. In addition to this, Members who already use the platforms will be provided with advice and support to ensure they keep themselves safe whilst online, as well as learning the potentials outcomes of comments that are made online.
- 3.35 During 2014/15 further 60 minute sessions on particular subjects that are emerging across the Council or particular themes/development needs will be offered to Elected Members.

One of these emerging themes is ensuring Information Governance is in place for Elected Members and that all Members have the knowledge and understanding to act legally and compliantly when dealing with sensitive and confidential information.

### **One to One sessions**

- 3.36 Over the last eighteen months individual training needs have been gathered via the Member Development Forum, who each have a specific identified number of Members to support in identifying their development needs. During 2014/15 the process of Member one to ones will be re-launched and all Members will be encouraged to have a one-to-one meeting with an officer from the Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny team. Further ideas and alternatives will be explored for gathering development needs via surveymonkey and also at evening events as part of the close and evaluation of the session.
- 3.37 All newly Elected Members for 2014/15 were offered a one to one session with an officer of the Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny team as part of their initial induction which took place during the Member Support Group sessions in June 2014 following the elections.

### **E-learning**

- 3.38 All Elected Members now have access to the AGMA E-learning tools via the virtual college. This resource is available to all colleagues and Members within the authority and all Members can now access the e-learning courses available to them. A standard set of courses have been assigned to all Tameside Members, these include:- Data Protection at Work, Equality and Diversity in the Workplace, Fire Safety and Evacuation, Health and Safety in the Workplace, Responsible for Information. Further work will be undertaken throughout 2014/15 to promote greater use of e-learning.
- 3.39 The previous Elected Member Development report presented to Board in March 2013 outlined the potential sign up of the Council to 'Modern Councillor', an online training resource for Elected Members. Due to compatibility issues and costs this has subsequently not taken place and as a result the online e-learning resource available to Members is through the AGMA Virtual College.
- 3.40 At present the number of Members who have accessed the e-learning system is limited and currently no Members have completed any of the modules or training packages that have been offered to them. This suggests that e-learning may not be conducive to the preferred way of learning and development for Elected Members. Further work will be done throughout 2014/15 to promote the use of e-learning with Members and explore other alternatives.
- 3.41 It is proposed that in 2014/15 the Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny Team will consult with Members to establish a complementary way of providing training and development to support the use of the online e-learning facilities.

### **Consultation**

- 3.42 Ongoing consultation has taken place with Members throughout the year via various methods such as survey monkey and questionnaires. It is proposed that an end of year questionnaire be circulated to all Members to establish their views and opinions on their own personal development and the Member Development that has been provided since the launch of the new programme in March 2013. (See **Appendix 1** for a copy of the Member Development Questionnaire). This questionnaire will complement the Member one to ones to help shape and develop future focus for Member Development within 2014/15 and beyond.

### **New Member Induction**

- 3.43 As part of the induction process for newly elected Members, the Workforce, Partnerships and Scrutiny Team will contact all newly Elected Members to make an individual appointment to discuss individual training and development priorities and needs for the



forthcoming year. This takes place within two months of the newly Elected Member joining the Council.

- 3.44 In addition to this, newly Elected Members will be offered the opportunity to be mentored by a more experienced Member in order to provide support, advice and development opportunities within their new roles. This is co-ordinated via the Elected Member Development Forum.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As outlined on the front of this report.

# Elected Member Development Strategy 2013-15





## Statement of intent from Leader, Chief Executive and Deputy Executive Leader

Tameside MBC recognises the crucial roles Elected Members play as an important driving force in the success of the Borough. Tameside works hard to ensure that Elected Member Development is a priority and that Members are given the opportunities they need to develop their skills, knowledge and experience creating a culture of continual learning and improvement.

As the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and the Chief Executive we are committed to ensuring that the Council provides the best opportunities for Members to enable them to fulfill the expectations of the electorate. We believe that this strategy will assist Members in providing strong leadership for both the Council and improving the service to our communities.



**Leader**  
Cllr K Quinn



**Deputy Leader**  
Cllr J Taylor



**Chief Executive**  
Steven Pleasant

# Introduction and aims of the strategy

Tameside Council supports and encourages the development of its Elected Members, seeing them as driving force for service development and integral to the Council delivering its Community Strategy.

Tameside Council's Corporate Plan for 2012/15 sets out a challenging programme of improvement and details the Council's response to the current financial and economic challenges. The Plan reflects the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Big Conversation, which will affect and determine the shape of future council services and the political direction of the council into priority areas.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure that Elected Members, whether newly elected or established have updated and comprehensive skills to deal with the challenges ahead. The strategy will provide a clear framework for assessing, delivering and evaluating learning and development interventions.

The Local Government Association formulated a Political Skills toolkit as a framework to develop local leadership that can be used to support Elected Member Development. There are six core competencies; Local Leadership, Partnership Working, Communications Skills, Political Understanding, Scrutiny and Challenge and Regulating and Monitoring. The toolkit is designed to support Elected Members in reviewing their individual development needs and encourages self-reflective learning across the following themes.

## Local Leadership

refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and to facilitate a vision for the locality. It encourages trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.

## Partnership Working

focuses on the Councillors role of building good relationships with others; colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations by working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for Councillors to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long term view in developing partnerships.

## Communication Skills

recognises the need for Councillors to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of the community using different forms of media.

## Political Understanding

recognises the need for Councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. Councillors need to work across boundaries whilst maintaining their political integrity.

## Scrutiny and Challenge

is an important aspect of their day to day role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside the Council, by providing feedback and political challenge. To be effective in this role, Councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise meaningful and easily understood

## Regulating and Monitoring

this relates to the more judicial aspect if a Councillors role and requires them to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do Councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.



# Strategic Direction

The emphasis of Elected Members roles has changed over recent years, seeing an increasing emphasis on partnership working and public involvement. Tameside's key service delivery decisions are made following consultation through the Big Conversation, resulting in Elected Member roles becoming more strategic and performance based.

As the Council's workforce has significantly reduced in size and is still going through significant changes it is essential that Member development links directly to the Council's priorities, ensuring that Elected Members have the necessary skills, knowledge and support required to provide leadership for the Council and the community.

# Priorities for Training

As Thameside Council continues to embrace this period of austerity, it is more essential than ever to ensure our elected members are confident leaders, equipped to tackle the challenges of reinvigorating local government to meet the new agendas of community budgets and the newly established community right to challenge. As the Localism Act 2011 begins to take effect, Elected Members must be up to date and confident to deal with the main measures of the act

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

Under the Health and Social Care bill 2011, the Government is returning responsibility for improving public health to local authorities. The main reasons being so that public health is population focused at a local level, and it is able to shape those services in accordance with local needs, whilst having the ability to influence wider social determinants of health and tackle health inequalities. From April 2013 Public Health will be the responsibility of all Elected Members.

# Member Development Forum

The Member Development Forum will meet quarterly, chaired by Cllr John Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader). The forum will discuss Elected Member development to ensure that the delivery plan is robust and flexible to accommodate emerging themes for both Members and the Council. The forum will feedback from its quarterly meetings to inform the evaluation of the overall programme to be reported back to ET.

## **Membership of the forum is as follows;**

**Cllr J Taylor (Chair)**

**Cllr D Lane**

**Cllr R Welsh**

**Cllr C Reynolds**

**Cllr J Jackson**

**Cllr S Quinn**

**Cllr J Middleton**

# Training Needs Analysis

Elected Member Development interventions will be assessed and delivered in line with the Councils strategic priorities, whilst also providing additional support where needed for portfolio holders. A robust eighteen month delivery plan will incorporate both the personal development needs and the organisational development needs for each Elected Member. The delivery plan will have flexibility within it to incorporate any emerging priorities.

Training needs will be assessed through various methods; one to ones, group sessions, survey monkey – an online question and evaluation tool, the Elected Member Development Forum and ad-hoc emergent priorities.

As the Council continues to face significant challenges in reshaping service delivery, the Elected Member Development Plan will now have essential and optional elements to it. This will ensure Members are guided to attend the essential development elements of the plan where their capacity is limited.

# Training Delivery

Delivery of training and development will be flexible to meet Elected Members availability, with the appropriate use of Council and Partner venues.



## Newly Elected Members

This is designed by the Member Support Team in Member Services and this year's programme contained the following elements: Mobile Telephone and IT Provision, Meet the Executive Team, The Council Constitution, Introduction to Scrutiny, Partnerships and the Corporate Plan, Introduction to Local Government Finance, Introduction to District Assemblies Introduction to District, Introduction to Planning, Running Effective Surgeries and access to the Member Support Group. Members are given an information pack when they start on the programme containing the necessary fact sheets.

Members are also enrolled onto the Members Portal that sits on the Council's ICT system. This portal is available to them from any computer so they can log on from anywhere. The portal contains the following information for Members to keep updated: Elector Search, CRM Messages for their ward, Complaints, Planning Applications, Forward plan, Council, Scrutiny Cabinet reports and minutes, Ward Profile, Street Scene Request, Bulletin Board, User Guide, Licensing, Road works, Councillor Profile and Press Releases.

## Existing Members

Their individual training and development needs will be assessed via the various methods discussed and incorporated into the eighteen month delivery plan.

Each Elected Member will have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) where their training and development needs are recorded, along with any development received with its appropriate certification and evaluation.

## Internal Training

The internal training provision for Elected Members will be coordinated through the Organisational Development Team.

## External Training

External training provision will be limited but where essential will be procured and delivered within budget.

# E-Learning

E- Learning will be offered from either home computers or work stations, through The Learning Pool, who have developed an E Learning application called The Modern Councillor. The learning modules are: Introduction to Local Government, Your Role as a Councillor, Code of Conduct, Technology and Change, Getting Started with Social Media, Writing for the Web, Working with the Media, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Best Practice Procurement, Licensing and Regulation, Data Protection, Transformational eDemocracy, Localism Bill, Community Leadership, Public Speaking and Chairing Meetings.

# Member Development Evenings

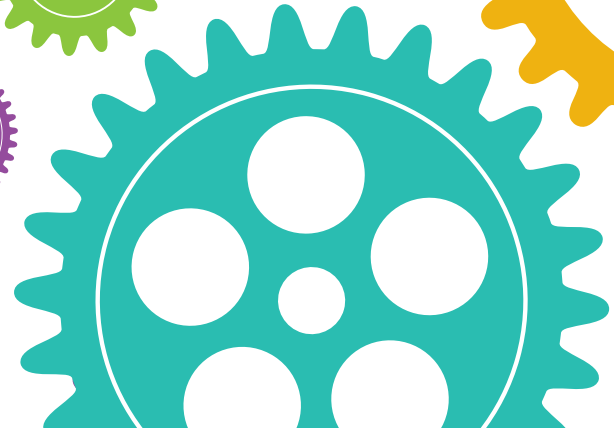
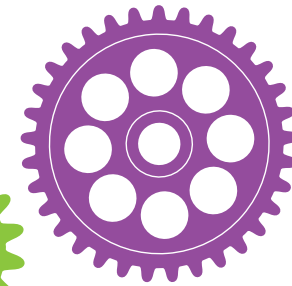
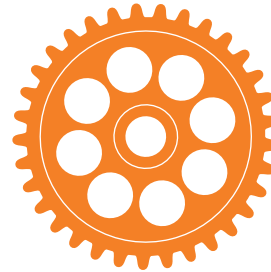
These will be designed and delivered around key themes and priorities for the Council and will be delivered on a monthly basis. These sessions in particular will be identified to Elected Members as being either essential or optional. Elected Members are asked to attend all the essential sessions with any of the three most appropriate optional sessions from the eighteen month plan.

# GEARS Portal – Elected Member Access

The GEARS portal is the engagement and development portal which has been introduced across the Council for the workforce and Elected Members. The development of the portal is still in its early stages, however in terms of development it will become a hub of knowledge for Elected Members holding session content and delivery materials for easy access to all development that has taken place.

# North West Employers Organisation

Agreed Elected Members will be able to access a number of delivered sessions via our membership to North West Employers. These sessions include; Community Leadership: What does this look like for the 21st Century Councillor?, Localism: The beginning of a new era, Governance: Exploring new approaches, Health Care Reform: The challenge for councillors, constituents and services, Welfare Reform: The impact on the communities and demand for local services, Economic Stewardship: Creating local economies that benefit the local people and Social Growth and Civil Society: The changing relationship. There are also free sessions run by North West Employers for both newly elected and existing members that are free of charge to attend. Membership to North West Employers also allows Elected Members to access and attend networking events across the region and have access to Northwest Connex, which is a web-based interactive service.





# Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Training and development will be reviewed in a number of systematic ways which will assist in evaluating the eighteen month delivery plan and assist in designing future development needs. Training and development will be assessed and evaluated on an individual basis as well as at a Council and partnership level to ensure strategic development needs are being met. Additional evaluation and review will be provided via the Member Development Forum which will meet once a quarter to discuss past and future development.

There will be ongoing reviews of the development provided to support the changing role of Elected Members and Personal Development Plans (PDPs) will be monitored and reviewed in line with changing development needs.



# APPENDIX 2

## Elected Member Development Survey

### You in your role

**1. How satisfied do you feel about your own development within your role as an Elected Member?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not applicable

**2. Do you have access to all of the Council policies and strategies which are relevant to your role in the Council and in the community?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If no, what area would you benefit from accessing further?

**3. Would you like further training/information on different aspects such as:- The Corporate Plan, The Corporate Improvement Plan, The Community Strategy, Local Development Plan, other Council policies which are part of the corporate policy framework and Policies relating to Sustainability and Equalities.**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, what further information/ training do you require?

**4. Would you be interested in acting as a Mentor for newly Elected Members?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**5. Is there any additional support from officers generally that you would find useful?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If 'Yes' please provide further

details



**6. Do you think you need to develop any of your skills and knowledge to perform your current role as an Elected Member?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**7. Do you have experience, skills and knowledge that you would be happy to share with less experienced Elected Members?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**8. Would you like to discuss your development support with any of the following?**

- Another Elected Member
- A Senior Officer
- A Workforce Development Officer
- A Democratic Services Officer
- I would not like to discuss my development
- Other

Other (please specify)

**9. With the increasing responsibility around Information Governance and Data Protection. How satisfied are you that you fully understand your responsibilities in relation to Information Governance and Data Protection?**

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

**10. Do you feel you would benefit from further training around Equality and Diversity?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**11. Are there any additional areas of development that you feel could be offered in relation to the following? Please specify in the spaces provided.**

Member Development events	<input type="text"/>
Internal Briefings	<input type="text"/>
Bespoke training courses for Members	<input type="text"/>
Coaching and Mentoring	<input type="text"/>
Personal Development	<input type="text"/>
Meeting with partners	<input type="text"/>
Chairing Skills	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>
None	<input type="text"/>

**12. Would you feel comfortable attracting resources and investment/ sponsorship into your ward?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**13. Are you aware of whom you need to contact within the different service areas, should a question or problem arise?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**14. Do you feel you would benefit from a specific list of contacts within each service area that Members can contact directly for information and with questions?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**15. Overall how satisfied are you with the topics that have been discussed at the Member Development Events?**

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

**16. How satisfied did you feel about the following areas of Member Development evening events?**

	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>The topics that were covered at the events</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not applicable
<b>The presenters at the events</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Not applicable
<b>The time given for the actual sessions</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Not applicable
<b>The content of the sessions</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Not applicable
<b>The opportunities to ask further questions at the events</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not applicable
<b>That the session was suitably formal or informal</b>	<input type="radio"/> Very satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Not applicable

**17. When would you prefer Member Development activities to be arranged for? Please tick all that apply.**

- Mornings
- Midday
- Afternoons
- Evenings
- Weekends

Other

Other (please specify)



**18. Do you feel that we should continue to offer light refreshments (sandwiches and wraps) at the Member Development events in the future?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**19. Are there any subject areas you would like to see at one of the Member Development Events? Please answer in the box below**



**20. How would you prefer development activities within the Council to be delivered for Elected Members? Please tick all that apply.**

- Conferences/ seminars
- Briefings
- Mentoring
- Workshops
- E-Learning
- Other

Other (please

specify)



**21. Are there any areas you feel you could develop yourself further?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking     | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-promotion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation         | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding of social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation skills | <input type="checkbox"/> IT Skills                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with media  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                         |

Other (please specify)

**22. In your role as an Elected Member do you feel you would benefit from training on any of the following? Please tick all that apply.**

- Chairing effectively
- Social media
- Computer skills
- Lone working
- Communicating effectively
- Using your equipment and software
- Working in a paperless environment
- Developing methods of communication such as blogging and twittering
- Other

Other (please specify)

**23. Are there any aspects of your role where you would value further opportunities for development?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, please provide further details

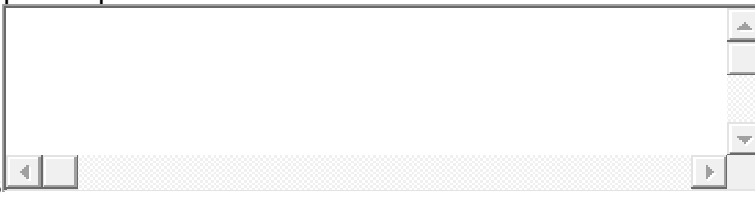
**24. How regularly do you feel the ward walks should take place?**

- Quarterly (with Neighbourhood Managers)
- Half Yearly (with Neighbourhood Managers)
- Yearly (with Senior Managers)
- Two Yearly (with Senior Managers)

**25. Do you think there is anything that could be done to improve Ward Walks?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, please provide further

details 

**26. Would you be interested in attending any of the following training sessions that are available within the Council?**

- Time Management
- Building Good Relationships
- Increasing your Resilience
- Succeeding During Change
- Tackling not Dodging
- Achieving your Goals
- Other

Other (please specify)

**27. Do you have any additional comments that you think would help us to improve Member Development within the Council?**



**28. Full name**



**29. Ward name**





**Tameside Council**

**NORTH WEST CHARTER  
ON MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

**LEVEL ONE REVIEW**

**VERIFICATION VISIT**

**ON**

**24 October 2014**

## **Tameside Council**

### **North West Charter on Member Development**

#### **Verification Visit**

Verification visits to authorities are undertaken by an elected member and an officer. On this occasion Councillor Salim Sidat, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Sharon Senior, North West Employers, conducted the verification visit.

The purpose of the visit was to verify the information submitted by the authority in their portfolio presented for assessment for the Charter on councillor development.

The format of the visit was four, forty five minute face to face interviews with councillors and officers from the authority. Whilst the content of the interviews is confidential, the information gathered has been used to support the submission made by the authority.

The following people were seen during the visit:

Councillor Kieran Quinn	Leader of the Council
Steven Pleasant	Chief Executive
Councillor John Taylor	Deputy Leader of the Council and Chair of the Member Development Forum
Councillor John Bell	Leader of the Opposition
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Randomly Selected Member
Councillor Oliver Ryan	Randomly Selected Member
Councillor Joyce Bowerman	Randomly Selected Member
Councillor Peter Robinson	Randomly Selected Member
James Gray	Workforce Development Consultant
Alison Williams	Workforce Development and Engagement Manager

Thanks to all those above who gave their time so generously on the day.

<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>ASSESSORS' COMMENTS</b>
1. Having a Statement of Intent	<p>Tameside Council first achieved Level 1 in 2001, level 1 Review in 2008 and achieved Level 2 in 2010. To demonstrate that the council is still committed to the continued development of its councillors, a new Declaration of Commitment was signed by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Kieran Quinn and the Chief Executive, Steven Pleasant in 2014.</p> <p>There is a Member Development Strategy in place which re-iterates the authority's commitment to the principles of the North West Charter and sets out the vision for councillor development in Tameside. The strategy has recently been reviewed and is supported by an 18 month development plan.</p> <p>The Council has a designated Members Development Forum that acts in an advisory capacity around Member Development within the Council. The Forum meets on a quarterly and ad hoc basis and is used to identify development priorities. All councillors have a nominated point of contact on the forum which provides an established channel of communication for learning and development.</p> <p>There has been a notable shift in recent years, from a structured approach and training programme to more of an embedded culture of strategic conversations that have a very real focus on enabling councillors to understand the key priorities for the council. By engaging members through discourse, the programme continually evolves and enables councillors to make informed decisions.</p>

<p>2. Ensuring that all councillors are made aware of learning and development opportunities</p>	<p>There is an induction programme for all new councillors which includes a one to one meeting with the Workforce Development Team to identify any individual development needs and opportunities to meet with members of the Executive Team and other key officers. Councillors found this particularly informative and helpful in giving them confidence in the role.</p> <p>Learning and development opportunities are promoted via email and through the Member Development Forum. In addition to the email updates, councillors are able to request ad-hoc training on an individual basis or via their named contact on the Member Development Forum.</p> <p>Attendance at development events has increased with the introduction of more evening sessions. Whilst there is some e-learning available, there hasn't been a lot of take-up of this. It is evident that learning and development is something that is regularly discussed and councillors have the opportunity to find out about and discuss development events, learning and any other areas where they may need additional support to carry out their role effectively.</p>
<p>3. Having a process to identify individual development needs which involves councillors</p>	<p>All councillors have the opportunity of a 121 meeting with a member of the Workforce Development Team to discuss their individual needs. In addition to this, all councillors have a named representative that they are able to approach who can convey ideas, discussions and information to the Member Development Forum. This highlights the member-led approach which, in the main, has proven to be an effective way of engagement.</p> <p>Feedback on these discussions from councillors was very positive with them acknowledging the flexible, personal and responsive approach.</p>

	<p>The development offer available reflects a variety of learning styles and includes briefings, workshops, e-learning and input at sessions from key officers as required. The approach to position officers at tables with councillors at these events was acknowledged as having been very positive in facilitating group discussions and relationship building.</p> <p>Attendance at training and evaluations are reported back to the Member Development Forum. In addition to this, there is a flexible and responsive approach to development to support shifting national and local priorities throughout the year.</p>
<p>4. Having an officer allocated to assist councillors and groups in identifying needs and providing information on resources</p>	<p>Councillor development is supported by an enthusiastic and motivated Workforce Development Team. It was recognised that as a result of budget reductions, the team have had to think about how to support member development in new and different ways and have maximised internal resources wherever possible. Councillors are able to contact officers with regard to development opportunities and are kept up to date with event information, finding the approach informal and accessible.</p> <p>There is a strong organisational and political commitment to councillor development which is supported by a modest budget. The team is creative in its use of the budget and is looking at opportunities for joint working with partner organisations such as GMFRS and external agencies to develop cross public-sector co-operation.</p>
<p>5. Having a strategy to meet the learning and development needs of councillors</p>	<p>The Member Development Strategy was reviewed and updated in 2013. There is a clear link between the corporate priorities and the training and development that is</p>

	<p>offered.</p> <p>Councillor learning and development activities are evaluated through forms and followed up with conversations or telephone calls. These evaluations are reported back to the Member Development Forum on a quarterly basis but the Chair of the Member Development Forum also receives and responds to ad-hoc feedback. There is a desire for development to be councillor-led and for councillors to influence and inform what is delivered and this is evidenced through the format of the Forum.</p> <p>Councillors were able to provide examples of where training has been requested, for example, training on social media and this has been delivered on a 121 basis in response to differing skill levels.</p> <p>Literature, further reading and resources are often provided following development sessions to enable councillors to gain further understanding and knowledge of particular subject areas and officers from supporting services attend the sessions to provide support and advice.</p>
--	---

## **Continuous Improvement**

Although the purpose of the visit was to assess the submission for the Charter, it was also an ideal opportunity to discuss what improvements the authority would hope to make within the next three years.

All those interviewed were asked at the end of the interview what improvements they could suggest. They are recorded below to act as a reference point when the Charter is re-assessed in three years.

All the points noted below were agreed with by the assessor team.

- Consider the introduction of a more regular timetable of development events to provide councillors with more advanced notice – a combination of planned content and space for emerging themes
- Build on the aspiration to develop the skills of newer councillors to feel confident in accessing external opportunities ( LGA, peer review etc.) to enable greater reflection and learning opportunities
- Ensure that all councillors are aware of their named representative on the Member Development Forum and how they can actively engage
- Identify ways in which councillors could engage more in e-learning in the future
- Review the opportunities for refresher training on panels (planning committee/licencing etc.)
- Review whether councillors would benefit from having a copy of their individual training records
- Monitor the provision of development activities to ensure there is a balance between personal development and business requirements

## **Special Mention**

The intention of the Charter is to encourage authorities to adopt the five key practice points within the standard framework but we hope to encourage and celebrate innovation and excellent practice.

Where we have found "little gems" through the interview, we will take the opportunity to share these examples and give positive feedback to the authority:

- There was a very strong sense of clarity around the strategic vision and direction of the organisation and the role that councillor development has in supporting councillors in their different roles
- The focus on development being councillor-led was very apparent with both officers and councillors acknowledging this
- Providing all councillors with a named contact on the Member Development Forum is a really engaging way of ensuring that councillors are able to put their requirements forward
- The introduction of Ward Walks has created positive links between councillor initiatives and senior officers and has helped to bring about a better understanding of local issues
- The fluid and responsive approach to councillor development has supported a shift in the conversations taking place with councillors being involved from the outset and being able to influence proposals in an informed manner. This has also led to an increased confidence for councillors in explaining decisions to the community



## **Assessors' Comments**

It is clearly evident that Tameside Council is seeking to continually improve their councillor development provision. There is a clear, structured approach and opportunities are in place for councillors to develop their skills and knowledge.

Councillors clearly felt involved and supported in the process and felt that there is two-way communication in respect of identifying development needs and requesting support.

### **Recommendation from the Verification Team**

Having reviewed all the evidence, it is our view that Tameside Council meets the standards set out in the North West Charter on Member Development.

Signed:

---

**Sharon Senior**  
**North West Employers**

Signed:

---

**Councillor Salim Sidat**  
**Blackburn with Darwen Council**