

Report to:	Member Development Steering Group	Date of Meeting:	1 November 2022
	Cabinet		1 December 2022
	Council		19 January 2023
Subject:	Member Development in Sefton - The Next Steps		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report outlines the purpose and benefits of the North-West Employers Member Development Charter and the various steps to be taken in the process for achieving accreditation.

Recommendations:

Member Development Steering Group

- (1) That the Cabinet be requested to submit a recommendation to the Council that approval be given for the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive signing the Declaration of Commitment to the principles included in the North-West Member Development Charter and its intention to achieve Level 1 Member Development Charter Status, as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) That the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) undertake a self-assessment exercise at its next meeting using the North-West Employers Self-Assessment Framework, identifying what the Council already has in place in supporting Member Development and what it needs to develop it further.
- (3) That a draft Members Learning and Development Needs questionnaire and revised elected member roles and person specifications be submitted to the next Member Development Steering Group meeting for consideration prior to its circulation to all Members of the Council.
- (4) That the results of the Members questionnaire exercise and the self-

assessment exercise be utilised by Officers in the production of the draft Members Handbook 2023/24, Elected Member Learning and Development Plan 2023/24 and Member Learning and Development Strategy for consideration by the MDSG and approval by full Council on 20 April 2023.

Cabinet

- (1) That the Cabinet note the content of the report.
- (2) That the Council be requested to give approval for the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive signing the Declaration of Commitment to the principles included in the North-West Member Development Charter and its intention to achieve Level 1 Member Development Charter Status, as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Council

- (1) That the Council note the content of the report.
- (2) That approval be given for the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive signing the Declaration of Commitment to the principles included in the North-West Member Development Charter and its intention to achieve Level 1 Member Development Charter Status, as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Reasons for the Recommendations:

The NWMDC will provide an established framework enable the Council to undertake a self-assessment and review good practice in supporting and developing Sefton's elected members to help them fulfil the vital role they play in working with and supporting local communities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

To not sign up for and work towards the North-West Member Development Charter would mean that the Council would lose the benefit of an established framework for assessing, reviewing and developing good practice in the development of its Councillors which could mean that they might be less equipped to fulfil their vital role in working with and supporting their local communities.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None Directly

(B) Capital Costs

None Directly

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

There are currently no direct financial implications – the Council is a Member of NW Employers. Staffing would be from Democratic Services with support from other Council Departments (CLC, Strategic Support).

The Council will demonstrate that there are designated financial resources to support councillor learning and development that are used in a cost-effective way.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications

Equality Implications:

The Council's work towards the Member Development Charter will actively help to promote equality in the Council.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	Yes
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

The Terms of Reference for the Member Development Steering Group states that 'the development of a training plan(will be) based on an analysis of Members' needs and which reflects the needs and priorities of the Council as set out in the 2030 Vision and Council's Core Purpose'.

Protect the most vulnerable:

The current Member Development Programme offers a number of courses to help Councillors fulfil their role in protecting the vulnerable in our community – some of these are mandatory courses – i.e. Safeguarding Adults Awareness, Safeguarding Children and Young People, Corporate Parenting and Equality and Diversity Awareness; also non-mandatory courses – Hate Crime Awareness; Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery.

Working towards the Member Development Charter (MDC) will enable the Council (Steering Group) to monitor and identify further ways in which Councillors can enhance skills and knowledge to help protect the most vulnerable.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

The current Member development programme helps provide Councillors with the requisite skills and knowledge help them effectively lead and support their local residents to help facilitate confident and resilient local communities

Working towards the MDC the Steering Group will monitor and identify further ways in which Councillors can develop in this respect.

Commission, broker and provide core services:

A critical role of the Councillors is to make decisions on the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The Member Development Programme, currently offers 2 courses on – 'Introduction to Local Government Finance' and 'Treasury Management' to help Members gain an understanding of the financial environment in which the Council operates.

Working towards the MDC will help the Council (Steering Group) to monitor current provision and identify further member development to enhance Members' understanding and knowledge in commissioning, brokering and provision of core services.

Place – leadership and influencer:

A crucial role of Councillors is to positively lead and influence change both in their communities and across Sefton and the current Member Development Programme and also courses provided by North-West Employers and the Local Government Association provide guidance and advice to support Councillors in this.

Working towards the MDC will help the Council (Steering Group) monitor and enhance the training and development of Sefton's Councillors as Place leaders and influencers.

Drivers of change and reform:

A critical aspect of the work of Councillors is to be drivers of both in their communities and across Sefton and the Member Development Programme and also courses provided by North-West Employers and the Local Government Association provide guidance and advice to support Councillors in this.

Working towards the MDC will help the Council (Steering Group) monitor and enhance the development of Sefton's Councillors as effective drivers of change and reform.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:

The current Member Development Programme offers courses on 'Introduction to Local Government Finance' and 'Treasury Management' providing Councillors with information to help Members when making decisions which help to support sustainable economic prosperity.

In working towards the MDC the Steering Group will monitor existing provision and identify further ways and courses to enhance the development of elected Members in this respect.

Greater income for social investment:

The current Member Development Programme offers courses on 'Introduction to Local Government Finance' and 'Treasury Management' providing the Councillors with increased knowledge and insight when taking decisions relating to Council expenditure and investment.

In working towards the MDC the Steering Group will monitor existing provision and identify further ways and courses to enhance the development of elected Members in contributing to this core purpose.

Cleaner Greener

Councillors are able to access an e-learning course on Climate Change via Me-Learning.

In working towards the MDC the Steering Group will consider further ways and courses to help Councillor development in achieving a cleaner greener Sefton.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 6991) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5191) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Initial consultations with North-West Employers have begun and will continue for the foreseeable future in working towards the achievement of the NW Member Development Charter.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – North West Charter for Elected Member Development - Declaration of Commitment form.

Appendix 2 – North West Charter for Elected Member Development – The Process

Background Papers

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1.0 Introduction Background

The Council on 21 April 2022 considered a report which reviewed the Member Development Programme 2021-2022 and the proposed Member Development Programme 2022-2023 and gave approval for the establishment of a Member Development Steering Group to comprise representation from the respective political groups.

The Council also endorsed the intention to work towards achievement of the North-West Member Development Charter for Sefton which will be the main focus of the Steering Group.

2.0 **Benefits of the North West Development Charter (NWMDC)**

- 2.1 The core principle underpinning the NWMDC is that at the heart of any Council dedicated to meeting the needs of its community there will also be a commitment to the development of its Councillors.
- 2.2 The NWMDC provides an established framework to enable councils to undertake a self-assessment and review good practice in supporting and developing Councillors to fulfil the vital role they play in working with and supporting local communities.
- 2.3 Signing up for and working towards achievement of NWMDC can lead to the following benefits:

Impact on Councillors

- The quality of councillor development is improved
- New councillors are better prepared for their roles and responsibilities
- Councillor progression is better enabled
- Helps ensure councillors can operate at their most knowledgeable, skilled and effective
- Increases councillors' competence and confidence
- Helps councillors navigate the ever more complex and demanding role and local government landscape
- Self-care and reflection for councillors through development and growth.

Impact on All Partners

- Strengthens member-officer relationships
- Helps ensure effective top team political and managerial leadership
- Encourages robust and accountable decision making
- Helps ensure proactive succession planning
- Helps improve councillor diversity
- Enhances democracy and participation

3.0 **Process/Steps to be taken in working toward Level 1 of the North West Member Development Charter**

- 3.1 To start the accreditation process, the Leader and Chief Executive would be required to sign a declaration (shown at Appendix 1 to the report), to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the principles included in the Charter.

This is an important first step as it is intended to promote a healthy discussion on the Council's needs and intention in terms of member development. The Council's signed **Declaration of Commitment** would then be forwarded for signature by the Chair of North-West Employers and returned to the Council.

- 3.2 Using the Charter framework, the Council would build a portfolio to practically demonstrate this commitment and that it has met all the requirements. This would be followed by an external assessment before being awarded the charter. Appendix 2 sets out **The Process** for applying for Level 1 of the Charter.

- 3.3 It is proposed that the MDSG undertake a self-assessment exercise at its next meeting using the NWE Self-Assessment Framework, identifying what the Council already has in place in supporting Member Development and what it needs to develop further in respect of:

1. A clear commitment to councillor development across the whole of the Council
2. Promoting Member learning and development opportunities
3. A Councillor led approach to learning and development
4. A strategy that includes impact measures within a continuous improvement framework

- 3.4 The Member Development Handbook 2023/24 and a Member Learning and Development Plan for 2023/24 will need to be produced by mid-April 2023 and to assist in that process, it is proposed that a questionnaire be sent to all Members of the Council to seek their views and to identify any future learning and development needs. A copy of the draft questionnaire and revised elected member roles and person specifications will be submitted to the next meeting of the MDSG for consideration.

- 3.5 The results of the Members questionnaire exercise and the self-assessment exercise will be utilised by Officers in the production of the draft Member Development Handbook 2023/24, Elected Member Learning and Development Plan 2023/24 and Member Learning and Development Strategy for consideration by the MDSG and approval by full Council on 20 April 2023.