

SUBJECT:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2025/26 AND ATTENDANCE IN 2024/25
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	CHERYL EVANS, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** This report presents the programme of dates for Member Development sessions and seeks the views of the Ethics and Engagement Committee on possible topics for these sessions, which the Committee would like to see included.
- 1.2** The Ethics and Engagement Committee is invited to establish a working group to consider Member Development in more detail, including setting the Member Development programme for 2025/26 and to receive data on councillor attendance at sessions held in 2024/25 to enable the Committee to have ownership and oversight of Member Development. The working group would consist of the Chair of Ethics and Engagement Committee and up to four other members.

2. Background

- 2.1** Elected members are integral to ensuring that the strategic aims and objectives of the Council are met and that high quality, cost effective services are delivered to the residents of the City.
- 2.2** Following an Internal Audit on Governance Health Check undertaken in 2024, it was concluded that the Ethics and Engagement Committee should receive, on at least an annual basis, the programme of member development and training for the coming year to enable the Committee to take ownership and have oversight of development needs for Councillors. A draft programme of Member Development and Training Sessions for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix A to the report. The Committee is invited to consider topics to the draft programme.
- 2.3** The Council is working to support the development of all its elected members to ensure that they are able to meet the demands of their roles. The Council is committed to ensuring that:
 - There is a planned and structured approach to member learning and development under the oversight of the Ethics and Engagement Committee.
 - Access to learning and development is equitable.
 - Members are encouraged to identify their own development needs via the Ethics and Engagement Committee and participate fully in learning and development activities.

- The Member Development Programme will be reviewed and updated annually in order to support the Council's objectives, the roles and functions of its members and any key changes affecting the Council's priorities.

3. Induction

- 3.1** Induction for new members takes place every year that local elections are held for the City of Lincoln Council. This includes a planned two-day programme, which has previously been approved by the Ethics and Engagement Committee and is attached at Appendix B to the report. Topics covered include Meet the Chief Executive and Directors; an overview of the decision-making process; an introduction to various teams from across the Council; and a session with the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer on code of conduct. The Committee is invited to comment on the proposed Councillor Induction Programme for 2026.

4. Mandatory Committee Training

- 4.1** Some of the Council's committees require attendance by the appointed committee members to attend mandatory training sessions, for example Planning Committee and the Audit Committee. Councillors are not able to participate as a Committee Member if they have not attended these training sessions. These sessions have already been incorporated into the Programme of Member Development.

5. Member Development: Equality & Diversity

- 5.1** Local councils play an important role in reducing inequalities and supporting inclusion and cohesion in our communities. Councils also have specific obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Committee is therefore invited to identify potential topics for inclusion in the Programme of Member Development.

- 5.2** The proposal for equality and diversity training for members is a combination of overview awareness with local information and this would include:

1. LGA – A councillor's workbook on equality, diversity and inclusion and the 9 protected characteristics
2. An update on the Council's revised equality and diversity document suite
3. Spotlight – Diverse Communities
4. Spotlight – Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in the United Kingdom
5. Spotlight – Disability
6. Spotlight – Young People
7. Spotlight – Older residents
8. Spotlight – Military and Armed Forces Community and Veterans
9. Spotlight – Health Inequalities
10. Spotlight – Sexual Orientation
11. Spotlight – Sex, Gender and Identity
12. Spotlight – Neurodiversity

- 5.3** It is recommended that these are predominantly delivered via Microsoft Teams to be inclusive and maximise attendance.

- 5.4 There may be some guest speakers who prefer to deliver in person, in which case hybrid attendance would be available for members.

6. **Methods of Learning and Development**

- 6.1 A flexible approach to the delivery of training and development opportunities will be adopted to meet the potential needs of individuals and groups. A variety of methods may be used to deliver these opportunities and could include seminars, workshops, e-learning and briefing sessions delivered via a mix of in-person sessions and the use of Microsoft Teams.
- 6.2 The use of Microsoft Teams has seen an increase in attendance at Member Development Sessions, as it offers flexibility for anyone wishing to attend. These sessions are also recorded to enable councillors who could not attend at the original date and time, to view the session when able.

7. **Attendance at Member Development Sessions**

- 7.1 The Internal Audit on Governance Health Check also recommended that the Ethics and Engagement Committee receive, on an annual basis, a record of attendance at each Member Development Session, to enable the Committee to assume a monitoring role. This will enable the Committee to assess the effectiveness of the member development programme and its delivery. An overview of attendance for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix C to this report. The working group will receive further details on attendance at its meeting.

8. **Strategic Priorities**

8.1 **Let's reduce all kinds of inequality**

Local councils play an important role in reducing inequalities and supporting inclusion and cohesion in our communities and the proposed training will enable councillors to support this role.

9. **Organisational Impacts**

9.1 **Finance**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9.2 **Legal Implications, including Procurement Rules**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9.3 **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Local councils play an important role in reducing inequalities and supporting inclusion and cohesion in our communities and the proposed training will enable councillors to support this role.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1** The Ethics and Engagement Committee is invited to establish a working group to consider in more detail the draft Member Development Programme for 2025/26 and further data on councillor attendance at Member Development sessions held in 2024/25.
- 10.2** The Ethics and Engagement Committee is invited to comment on the proposed Induction for 2026 for new councillors.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	Three
List of Background Papers:	None

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