![Nottinghamshire County Council]

Report to Governance and Ethics Committee

25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

MEMBER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME – PROGRESS UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To present an update to members on the progress made to date across the programme with a particular focus on the actions relating to training and development.

Information

2. An update report on the Activity Plan relating to the Members Communication and Engagement Programme was considered at a meeting of this Committee on December 17th 2019. A further update focussing on the proposals for a Members Hub was brought to Committee at its meeting in October 2020.

3. As previously mentioned, unfortunately during the COVID-19 lockdown, the focus of Democratic Services support had to be placed on the development and implementation of virtual Committee meetings and Education Admission Appeals. This work was and continues to be, resource intensive and as a consequence the planned member development training sessions for spring/summer period were not able to proceed to ensure that important democratic processes could continue.

4. More recently, it has been possible to refocus some capacity on the work of the Activity Plan and this report is to update members on the elements around Training and Development for members. There were 6 specific elements to this section and progress with each of the elements can be summarised as follows:

No.	Activity	Status	Comments
4.1	Initial internal programme of training and development	Completed /in delivery	Independent Persons (18/9/2019) Personal Safety (281/2020) ICT devices (Spring/Summer 2020) Unconscious Bias (November 2020) Social Media (December 2020/January 2021)

4.2	Launch members' learning and development landing page on My Learning, My Career Portal	On Target	Landing Page available. Initial design and concept ready for feedback through member working group along with ideas for further content.
4.3	Explore and develop options for external training within available budgets.	In discovery	Unconscious bias training by LGA. Member reference group to consider member needs, available courses (e.g. LGA, EMC and LGiU) and approach to allocation of budgets for training and report back.
4.4	Launch blended programme of training and development, tools and techniques	In discovery	New programme to be launched alongside induction for new members after May 2021 election.
4.5	Develop and roll out comprehensive member induction and mandatory training programme for implementation after May 2021 County Council elections	On Target	See initial draft programme attached at Appendix 1 to be reviewed in more detail by member working group.
4.6	Rolling programme of events, workshops, guidance, toolkits, online, interactive and face to face training and development opportunities to meet members' needs within available budgets.	On Target	Links to items 4.3 and 4.4 and depends on identified needs and courses available within budgets

5. In the short term, training for members on equalities and unconscious bias has been arranged for a number of sessions in November. In addition, training on use of social media (including references to the relevant LGA guidance) and how that links to ethical conduct and standards is being explored to ensure that members have the latest advice and guidance relevant to their roles.

6. Attached at Appendix 1 is an enhanced induction and training programme to support all members, following the County Council elections next year. It is hoped that all members will take advantage of the induction programme events so that they have the benefit of the latest

information about their roles, the Council and how it functions and how to manage their relationship with their constituents, officers and other stakeholders.

7. In addition, there will be a number of standard mandatory training topics to ensure that all Councillors are equipped with up to date knowledge and awareness of important issues to assist them in undertaking their roles in a modern and effective way.

8. Allied to these will be role based training focussed on members appointed to specific roles where additional training will be available in order to upskill members in respect of the demands and expectations of those roles.

9. As regards the longer term picture, officers are keen to work with the member working group established by the Committee in October to consider elements of the programme. It is envisaged that this will help to identify additional training needs and cost-effective training opportunities which may be available for members as individual learning and/or group training capable of being delivered effectively online.

10. In order to give this work some further impetus it is suggested that the Member Working Group:
    a. review a range of training opportunities for inclusion in a more developed programme,
    b. consider the nature of soft skills training which members would prefer, and
    c. "road test" access to a variety of options through the online Portal to which all members have access (and which was briefly demonstrated as part of the Members Hub at the last meeting of this Committee).

11. In respect of the latter point, the proposal for the members training Portal is for there to be a dedicated "landing page" on the Council's intranet site which will provide a single point of access for all information for members, including member training and development. This will enable access to a pre-planned programme of events specifically tailored to the needs of Nottinghamshire members. This will most likely be a combination of both online and face to face learning, and the portal will give further suggestions and access to a wide range of other online training modules, which members can browse and engage with at their leisure and according to their personal needs and preferences.

Reasons for Recommendation

12. To update members on progress to date with activities falling within part 4 of the Activity Plan agreed by members in December 2019.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Finance Implications

14. There are no financial implications at this stage and identified training needs and access to relevant training opportunities will have to be contained within current budget provision which currently amounts to £5000 in total for all members training needs.

Human Resources Implications

15. Work on tailoring the learning portal access and appropriate content to members needs will be carried out in conjunction with colleagues in the Workforce Planning and Organisational Development Team.

Implications for Service Users

16. The aim of the Member Training and Development Programme is to provide improved engagement with and access to available training and development opportunities for elected members throughout their time in office, through a single, easy to access portal for Members. Feedback from the member working group will inform the design and content of the learning Portal to ensure fitness for purpose for members' use.

RECOMMENDATION

a) That members approve the overall approach being taken towards improving member training and development;
b) That members provide feedback on the initial draft induction and training programme attached at Appendix 1 and any further suggestions for content;
c) That the member working group undertake further detailed work on the induction and training programme, consideration of a survey of members' needs, best use of and access to available training budgets, and design, accessibility and content for the learning portal and report back to a future meeting of this Committee early next year;

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Constitutional Comments (HD – 30/9/2020)

23. The proposals within this report are within the remit of the Governance and Ethics Committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 12/11/2020)

24. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Members Communication and Engagement Programme Update – Report to Governance and Ethics Committee 17 December 2019 (Published)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All