

Governance and Ethics Committee

14 March 2024

Report title	Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield, Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
Originating service	Organisational Development	
Accountable employee(s)	Chloe Elwell	Organisational Development Advisor
	Tel	01902 552765
	Email	Chloe.Elwell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities Briefing	04 March 2024
	Councillor Development and Information Technology Advisory Group	12 April 2024

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the proposed Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025.

Recommendations for noting:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is asked to note:

1. The Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025 may change or develop as the year progresses dependent on additional learning needs that may arise.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report will outline the Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025, which includes in-house courses, mandatory training requirements, and additional courses and webinars available by the Local Government Association (LGA).
- 1.2 This report will also highlight a recommended process for approval of Councillor requests for external courses and conferences that have an associated cost.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Every year a Councillor Development Programme is created, outlining training and development opportunities available to support Councillors in their role.
- 2.2 Within this Programme a variety of training and development opportunities that are aligned to Our City: Our Plan and the strategic direction of the Council have been proposed for the forthcoming financial year. These opportunities include in-house courses, mandatory training modules, LGA free and costed courses, as well as information on other resources and webinars. In addition, within the Programme a proposed booking process has been outlined for Councillors requesting attendance at other external courses and conferences. See Appendix 1 for the proposed Councillor Development Programme 2024 – 2025.
- 2.3 The following in-house courses have been identified to be arranged for 2024 – 2025.

Date	Course	Provider	Attendees
May	Licensing Committees, Taxi Licensing and Licensing Act 2003 Training	James Button & Co	Licensing Committee Members
June	Probity in Planning	Bethan Evans Governance Training and Consultancy	Planning Committee Members
September/January	Digital Skills Workshops	Internal	Open to all
September	Suicide Awareness	Integrated Care Board	Open to all
September	Treasury Management	TBC	TBC
October	Supporting yours and your residents' wellbeing with Able Futures	Able Futures	Open to all
November	Climate Action Awareness and Communication	Internal- Green Cities and Circular Economy	Open to all
December	Councillor Code of Conduct	Internal- David Pattison (Chief Operating Officer)	Open to all

January	Digital Skills Workshop	Internal	Open to all
TBC	Treasury Management Training	TBC	Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel Members

- 2.4 Councillors may also request attendance at external courses and conferences. However, it should be noted that these requests will need to be reviewed thoroughly to ensure they are appropriate and aligned with Our City, Our Plan or Councillors individual development needs. A proposed booking process for this has been included in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 Each request for an external course or conference will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The factors that will be considered in reviewing the appropriateness of the request are: the Councillor's role and responsibilities; alignment to the Council's Our City: Our Plan and strategic direction; provider reputation; cost and available financial resource; availability of alternative opportunities and location.
- 2.6 The Councillor Development Programme provides information regarding the mandatory training modules that should be completed by all Councillors on becoming an elected member of the Council. This will be reviewed annually as to whether any changes are required.
- 2.7 In addition, a list of opportunities available to Councillors via the LGA have been included. Some of these opportunities are free of charge and others are costed on a per person basis. Many of these courses, are aimed at Councillor roles, such as Committee Chairs and Cabinet Members.
- 2.8 The LGA also provide a number of other development resources such as webinars, workbooks, e-learning modules that all Councillors are encouraged to access.
- 2.9 All upcoming training and development opportunities will be regularly communicated to Councillors via the Councillor weekly email.
- 2.10 It should be noted that as the year progresses, the Councillor Development Programme may change and develop dependent on additional learning needs that may arise.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025 has been developed following an initial discussion with the Councillor Development and Information Technology Advisory Group to seek their feedback on councillor development needs.
- 3.2 In developing the Programme, consideration has been given to feedback from all Councillors. Councillors have been offered the opportunity to share any development or training needs; this request for feedback was communicated to Councillors via the

Councillor weekly bulletin. Any feedback and requests received from Councillors over the last year have also been considered.

- 3.3 Discussions have also been had with service areas who requested Councillor training in 2023 to understand if they anticipate any further training requirements for the 2024–2025 Programme. Where training is required, this has been factored into the 2024–2025 Programme.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The budget set aside for Councillor Development in 2024–2025 is £10,000. This is intended to cover any fees charged by external providers for the delivery of courses, either in this location or outside, and conference attendance requests from Councillors.
- 4.2 There are currently three proposed courses to be delivered by external providers in situ in 2024-2025, Planning Committee training, a Civic Coaching Programme and Treasury Management training. The combined estimated cost of these is £4,800, leaving just over half of the £10,000 budget remaining for other courses and conferences. Requests to attend external courses or conferences will be made through the proposed booking process and monitored through the Cabinet Member for Governance and Councillor Development and Information Technology Advisory Group.

[GE/27022024/Y]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Appropriate procurement processes will be carried out in line with the financial regulations where required.
- 5.2 There are no other legal implications.

[TC/23022024/E]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 The courses within the Councillor Development Programme will be available to all Councillors, unless attendance is only required for Councillors sitting on particular Committees or holding leadership positions.
- 6.2 The LGA offer several workshops specifically to support leadership development for Councillors who identify with certain protected characteristics. These workshops have been included as opportunities as part of the Councillor Development Programme.
- 6.3 Where requested by a Councillor, reasonable adjustments will be made for any in-house courses to support all Councillors to attend and fully participate within a training session.

7.0 Digital Implications

7.1 The Councillor Development programme supports the driven by digital agenda and provides opportunity for Councillors to develop digital skills through in-house workshops where appropriate.

7.2 **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

7.3 Councillors have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for support with health and wellbeing needs. The EAP is delivered by Viv Up and Councillors may access counselling support and confidential information and guidance from a qualified professional 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

7.4 Through Viv Up, Councillors can also access the Your Care wellbeing platform. The platform offers a range of personal, emotional, and financial wellbeing tools and resources to help build mental resilience and strengthen personal, emotional, and financial wellbeing.

7.5 The details of the support available can be found in the Councillor Handbook or by contacting the Organisational Development Team.

8.0 **Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1: Proposed Councillor Development Programme 2024–2025

8.2 Appendix 2: Proposed booking process for external course and conference requests from Councillors