

## **Governance Committee**

**2 December 2019**

### **Report of the Member Development Group**

#### **Report by Chairman**

#### **Summary**

The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing the member development process. It is a sub-group of the Governance Committee and provides regular reports to the Committee on its work.

This report provides an overview of member development activities since September 2019, including MDG's upcoming programme. It also provides updates on the programme 'Journey to the 2021 Elections' and work being undertaken towards the South East Employers Charter for Elected Member Development.

#### **Recommendation**

That the report be noted

## **1. Background and Context**

- 1.1 The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing the member development process. This includes the programme of all-member sessions that runs over the municipal year and an induction programme following elections every four years. MDG is also responsible for wider development activity including member training, skills development and obtaining feedback on the member role.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of member development activities since September 2019, including MDG's upcoming programme. It also provides updates on the programme 'Journey to the 2021 Elections' and work being undertaken towards the South East Employers Charter for elected Member Development.

## **2. Member Development Activity, September 2019 to March 2020**

- 2.1 There have been two Member Day sessions since the last report to the Committee, as set out below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
4 September 2019	Effective Scrutiny at West Sussex County Council	28
21 October 2019	Capital Programme	27

- 2.2 MDG was disappointed with the level of member attendance, but welcomed the positive feedback received from members who did attend, with comments including that the round-table discussions were particularly helpful. The outputs from this session have been reported to the Governance Committee's Scrutiny Review Panel. MDG has not had the opportunity to review the Capital Programme session, so its views on this will be included in its next report to the Governance Committee. Only two feedback sheets were returned from this session, so members who attended have been invited to complete an online evaluation form.
- 2.3 Plans for future Member Days are set out in the table below, although these may be subject to change. MDG considers all proposals for Member Day topics, taking into account member needs, priorities and service requirements.

Date	Topic
4 December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Member Day session on this date is being used for meetings of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee (morning) and the Small Schools Task and Finish Group (afternoon).</li> </ul>
8 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget 2020/21</li> </ul>
29 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be confirmed</li> </ul>
26 February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Waste Disposal Strategy</li> </ul>
25 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation Programme</li> </ul>

- 2.4 A number of plans for future events are being progressed with service leads and will be scheduled in due course. In addition, MDG has agreed that at least three Member Day dates should be set aside each year for skills training for members, this will include a rolling programme of events such as chairmanship, questioning skills, scrutiny training and safeguarding. Plans are already in place to schedule more adults and children's safeguarding training sessions as a matter of priority. It is intended that some of these skills events from March 2020 should be held at County Hall North in Horsham.

### **3. Journey to the 2021 Elections: Three-year Programme to Promote Local Democracy**

- 3.1 The Member Development Group Working Group (MDG WG) has moved into Phase Two of the programme 'Review of the Member Role' (April 2019 to March 2021). The role profile has been refreshed and members have been asked to comment. As part of this phase, the Working Group is also building a suite of member policies which will cover caring, parental leave, absence, lone working, anti-harassment and social media.
- 3.2 The first 'Be A Councillor' Event ahead of the 2021 election took place on the evening of 23 October 2019 at County Hall North, Horsham. This was aimed at encouraging people to think about standing for election. A separate event aimed at candidates (i.e. people who know they are standing) is planned for February 2021. Details of the event were shared widely, including through an

article in West Sussex Connections and the Parish Newsletter. Forty-two people registered to attend the event in advance with 21 attendees on the night. The Chairman opened the event and there were presentations from the Director of Law and Assurance and the Local Government Association. A cross-party panel of four members spoke about their roles and experiences and there was then a question and answer session. The feedback received was very positive and the event was covered by BBC Radio Sussex. Further 'Be a Councillor' events at Worthing, Crawley and Chichester are planned for 2020.

#### **4. Charter for Elected Member Development**

- 4.1 At its meeting in June 2019 MDG agreed to undertake the South East Employers (SEE) Charter for Elected Member Development, and this proposal was endorsed by Governance Committee in September 2019. An initial assessment of requirements requested by SEE has been undertaken and evidence is being compiled to support the refined assessment document, which will be presented to SEE in early November 2019. The main gap identified in the assessment is the requirement to have a strategy for member development in place. This will need to be the next step following comments from South East Employers on the initial assessment. The strategy will be developed by MDG and presented to the Governance Committee for consideration in due course.

#### **5. MDG Work Programme**

- 5.1 The next MDG meeting will consider feedback from recent member development sessions as well any priorities for the upcoming Member Development Programme. The Group will also consider the following:
- **Six-month review following the Members' IT rollout**– The Director of Public Health is invited to attend to discuss members' health and wellbeing.
  - **Journey to the 2021 Elections** – MDG will consider the next steps in Phase II of the programme and also further events for prospective councillors.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 No consultation has taken place because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

#### **7. Risk Management Implications**

- 7.1 It has been previously agreed that MDG will regularly report to the Governance Committee. To not do so would jeopardise the vital overview that the Governance Committee maintains regarding member development, training and engagement activity.

#### **8. Other Options Considered**

- 8.1 There are no other options to consider because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

**9. Equality Duty**

9.1 An Equality Impact Report is not required for this decision because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

**10. Social Value**

10.1 There are no social value implications because it is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

**11. Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications decision because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

**12. Human Rights Implications**

12.1 There are no Human Rights implications because this is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

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**Background Papers**

None