



<b>Subject:</b>	Elected Member Development
<b>Date:</b>	22 September 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Catherine Christy HR Manager - Development Fiona Gunning, Principal HR Advisor - Development

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• update elected members on existing processes and resources to support elected member development.</li><li>• seek agreement to participate in a reassessment process against the NILGA Elected Member Development Charter and re-establish the Elected Member Development Working Group on a task and finish basis to lead a review of elected member development support, and input into the Charter reassessment process.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note the contents of this report, agree to the Council's participation in Charter Plus reassessment and the establishment of the Elected Member Development Working Group on a task and finish basis.</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p data-bbox="272 192 863 226"><b>Elected Member Development Framework</b></p> <p data-bbox="272 241 1326 322">The council has in place a Member Development Framework to support member development. Its core elements are as follows:</p> <ul data-bbox="323 398 1449 887" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="323 398 1449 528">• a set of bespoke elected member role profiles - these set out the role(s), and responsibilities that elected members undertake as both a local representative and as a civic leader.</li> <li data-bbox="323 551 1449 680">• a bespoke Knowledge and Skills Framework - this sets out the knowledge, skills, qualities and behaviours elected members must demonstrate, in order to enact the role(s) of elected member effectively.</li> <li data-bbox="323 703 1449 784">• a personal development planning (PDP) process and individual PDP budget currently £730 per member per financial year; and</li> <li data-bbox="323 860 775 887">• an assistance to study scheme</li> </ul>
3.2	<p data-bbox="272 956 1469 1086">This framework was developed in 2016 by an Elected Member Development Working Group (EMDWG), comprising elected members and officers. The working group was established as a task and finish project group to:</p> <ul data-bbox="323 1162 1449 1597" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="323 1162 1449 1341">• develop appropriate processes and activities to ensure Members (at individual, party and council level) are supported and equipped to carry out their roles effectively in line with the Council’s Corporate Plan and the emerging themes from the Belfast Agenda.</li> <li data-bbox="323 1364 1449 1494">• ensure that Member development processes and practices continue to reflect best practice in line with the requirements of the Elected Member Development Charter framework.</li> <li data-bbox="323 1516 1257 1597">• To report to the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee on the key recommendations of the Working Group.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p data-bbox="272 1662 1469 1841">Following finalisation of a Member Development Framework, the EMDWG was stood down and it was agreed that any member development issue arising thereafter, be considered directly by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee until the framework was due for review.</p>

## **Elected Member Development Charter**

3.4 Belfast City Council was the first Council in Northern Ireland to be awarded the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development in 2011, in recognition of excellence in elected member development. In 2015 the council gained re-accreditation of Charter status (level one) and was reassessed successfully again in 2018 for Charter Plus status.

3.5 The Charter and Charter Plus helps councils to support councillor development and recognises councils that have built an effective approach. Intrinsic to gaining this accreditation is the Council demonstrating that members are developed in such a way that they are able to work strategically with partners and stakeholders, engage and lead local communities and deliver tangible, sustainable and beneficial outcomes for the citizens of the city. Charter Plus level requires evidence that the Council has continued with, and improved, its strategies for member development and that this work has clear links to the aims of the Belfast Agenda and outcomes which directly impact and deliver benefits for local communities.

3.6 An interim progress review discussion by NILGA in 2020, was delayed until May 21 because of the Covid pandemic. Following the interim review, it was agreed that, should the council wish to continue to participate in this accreditation, the full Charter Plus reassessment should take place early in 2024, allowing the new 2023 Council mandate to be embedded, and facilitate:

- Delivery of a modular induction programme for new and returning elected members
- Involvement of elected members in Charter Plus reassessment
- The development of a comprehensive elected member development plan
- a review of the Elected Member Development framework
- take up of Personal Development Plans by elected members.

3.7 It is proposed the Council proceeds with the Charter Plus assessment and that work to prepare for the assessment should start as soon as possible. Integral to this work will be a review of the Elected Member Framework to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and meets the needs of elected members.

	<p><b>Proposed arrangements.</b></p> <p>3.8 It is imperative that this work is elected member led with support and coordination provided by Corporate Human Resources and Democratic Services. It is therefore proposed that an Elected Member Development Working Group is re-established on a task and finish basis to review the elected member development framework and input into preparation for the Charter Plus reassessment process. The policy agreed by SP&amp;R is that representation on workings groups is a representative from each party with 2 or more members. The working group will be supported by officers from the Corporate HR Development Team and Democratic Services and follow the usual process for working group nominations and electing a chair. Draft terms of reference will be agreed at the first meeting of the working group. Those Members who are nominated to the Working Group would be tasked with championing Member development within their own party and on a Council-wide basis.</p> <p><b>Elected Member PDP arrangements for 2023/2024</b></p> <p>3.9 All members will be contacted shortly about the PDP process and what they need to do to avail of the personal development budget, including the completion of a self-assessment against the Councillor roles and responsibilities and knowledge and skills frameworks. There is also the opportunity to undertake a one-to-one PDP meeting with an experienced facilitator to create a development plan. The feedback from these PDPs will inform the development programme with the Corporate HR development team and other officers working to support members to carry out their roles more effectively.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.10 There are no additional financial or human resource implications in this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.11 There are no equality, rural needs or good relations implications in this report</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None