

**Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny
Management Committee**

23 May 2022

Report of the Director of Governance

Developing Scrutiny Members

Summary

1. The Chair has requested a position statement to this Committee relating to proposals for developing the skills and experience of those Members specifically allocated to serve on Scrutiny Committees within the Council.

Background

2. The Committee received a report in February 2020 considering the wider aspects of supporting and engaging elected Members in their work as a Councillor and in their communities.
3. In the months preceding this, the Chair, Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Director of Governance were involved in an ongoing dialogue focussed on identifying appropriate training opportunities for Scrutiny Committee Members.
4. Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs were engaged in December 2019 and there was a consensus view that tailored training for all Scrutiny Committee Members would be welcome.
5. Since that time, both the Joint Standards and Audit & Governance Committees have concerned themselves with the Council's arrangements and proposals for training and developing elected Members. More recently, Audit & Governance has taken on responsibility for reviewing and considering the full induction package for newly elected (and returning) Members following the May 2023 local elections. That package will include scrutiny training.

Analysis

6. As a refresher to the Committee, Members are advised that the following training is ordinarily provided to Councillors upon election:
 - Planned induction for all new Members;
 - Refresher training for longer serving, more experienced Members upon re-election and across years of service; framed around areas of responsibility;
 - Seminars/external conferences and activities for elected Members as part of a commitment to ongoing training;
 - Close liaison with the Local Government Association (LGA) on dedicated training and development, including delivery by the LGA to York Councillors of tailored training/advice;
 - A dedicated but small ongoing annual budget, with a larger budget being made available during induction year;
7. Any induction proposals would ordinarily include a suite of training specifically on scrutiny for those Members appointed to serve on Scrutiny Committees. Such training is normally provided, at a free or subsidised cost, by one of the larger national organisations supporting Members, such as the Local Government Association. Unfortunately, the current cohort of scrutiny members elected in May 2019 have not received the benefit of such training due to a combination of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the lack of support available from the LGA prior to the pandemic hitting. Due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic over 2 years, it has not been possible during this term to provide the usual external training and given the lack of resources available during this time to support more active scrutiny work, the Chair and Committee had previously taken a view that it would be best to wait and apply proper resources to such training as part of the 2023 induction package. It is the aspiration of the Chair that a full suite of ongoing and refresher training for Scrutiny Committee Members can be delivered throughout the 2023-2027 administrative term
8. The Chair and Officers have made initial contact with the former Centre for Public Scrutiny Studies (CfPS) to ascertain what training and support they could provide for our scrutiny members and under what arrangements. The former CfPS has been undergoing a restructure of its own arrangements and has therefore not yet been able to engage with the Council on what it can offer.

9. Audit & Governance Committee will receive a full and comprehensive induction package to consider and review in due course as part of its managed work programme. That will include options for scrutiny training.

Consultation

10. No consultation was required on this report which is for information.

Options

11. The report is for information purposes to note the role of Audit Governance Committee in this matter. However, the Committee may wish to consider requesting Audit & Governance Committee to keep it (or the Chair) specifically informed on any decisions made relating to training and induction provision for scrutiny.

Council Plan 2019-23

12. Whilst this report does not in itself materially affect how the work of scrutiny can support and develop the Council's overall priorities set out in the Council Plan 2019-23, how Councillors are developed and how meaningfully they engage with Scrutiny can impact on the Council's overall performance.

Implications

13. There are no known implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Risk Management

14. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

15. The Committee is asked to note the position relating to scrutiny training and the role of Audit & Governance Committee and consider whether it wishes to be kept informed of arrangements specifically for scrutiny members post May 2023 and beyond.

Reason: To ensure full and proper training for scrutiny Members post May 2023.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

All

Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report.