

# Member Training & Development Policy



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## Member Development Policy Statement - A Commitment

The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) has overseen the development of a policy aimed at promoting training and development opportunities for York's elected members.

The Steering Group is committed to ensuring the Council has well trained Members to:

- become effective Community Leaders;
- fulfil their varying roles;
- further the Council's values and priorities set out in its Corporate Strategy, including improving the Council's organisational effectiveness; and
- play their part in achieving a shared vision for York.

Underpinning this commitment, the Group has developed a policy based upon the following principles of the joint Local Government Yorkshire & Humber/Improvement & Development Agency (ID&eA) Charter.

- developing elected members as effective community leaders
- adopting a member lead strategic approach to member development
- having a member learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference development activities can make
- ensuring that learning and development is effective in building capacity
- addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship


To succeed in its ambitions, the Group is committed to ensuring:

- All members and co-opted members have equality of access to an annual core programme of training and development activities providing the skills and knowledge required to be effective both in their communities and their varying roles
- A planned and structured approach to training and development allowing equal access to development activities and maximising engagement at all levels
- Members take responsibility for their own development needs and fully participate in training and development activities
- Information on training and development activities is communicated in such a way as to give sufficient notice to attend
- adequate provision of resources for training and development opportunities to include a dedicated officer (Senior Member Support Officer) as first point of contact for all Member Training and Development matters
- all Members are offered an annual Personal Development Review with the aim of identifying and prioritising current training and development needs
- Where appropriate, shared training for members, senior officers and partners both within and across authorities is explored, to foster healthy working relationships and to make best use of resources
- there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers to Members participating in training and development activities
- evaluation and feedback relating to development activities are effectively monitored and reviewed so that future provision of training and development remains relevant and to a high standard

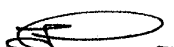
The delivery of our ambitions and commitment to developing Members to their full potential is set out in the Council's Member Training & Development Policy, which we will review annually.



Councillor Carol Runciman  
**Chair of Member Development Steering Group**



Councillor Sian Wiseman  
**Member Development Steering Group**



Councillor Julie Gunnell



# Member Training & Development Policy

## Introduction

It is vital that members on the Council are supported in all their diverse roles on the Council and this policy sets out the Council's commitment to providing a consistent and structured approach towards developing and supporting members in:

- Carrying out their existing roles efficiently, including effective community leadership;
- Preparing for future roles on an individual basis;
- Undertaking their specific duties and responsibilities;
- Contributing to improving the effective organisation of the Council;
- Keeping up to date with new legislation and changing policies

To demonstrate its commitment in recognising the potential and value of a well trained organisation, the Council has signed up to achieving Local Government Yorkshire & Humber/ I&DeA Member Development Charter status, pledging to adopt nationally recognised good practice guidelines .

## Being Corporate

City of York Council's revised Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's new strategic priorities for the period 2009/2012. As well as demonstrating to the city as a whole the work we are doing for our communities, it also gives all teams in the council, however different in their day to day work, a shared purpose.

The Corporate Strategy has eight themes:

- Thriving City – supporting York's successful economy
- Sustainable City – focussing on reducing our impact on the environment
- Safer City – reducing crime rates
- Learning City – providing local people with the opportunities to develop their skills and aspirations
- Inclusive City – making sure all citizens regardless of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith or gender feel included in the life of York
- City of Culture – inspiring residents and visitors to explore their creative talents
- Healthy City – providing healthier lifestyle choices and responsive health and social care provision
- Effective Organisation – Improving further its organisational standards to become a modern council and a great place to work

The Council recognises that one of the many factors in achieving its shared vision for the City in the provision of good quality training and development opportunities for both officers and members and these are identified as key areas for improvement in the Council's single improvement plan.

## A Councillor's Role

Once elected a councillor (elected Member) must represent the best interests of their residents, the Council and the City working in partnership. In performing their duties, a councillor will have the following roles:

- Representing the local interests of the community they are elected to serve (ward councillor)
- Setting and developing council policies
- Helping to shape and advise upon the policies of others (partners with whom the Council works)
- Scrutinise and investigate the Council's work and activities and the work and activities of others (statutory partners)
- Promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour across the Council and its parishes
- Consider and determine applications for planning and licensing consents and related issues

In addition to their roles as community representatives councillors may be appointed to:

- The Executive
- Scrutiny
- Planning
- Standards or governance committees
- Outside Bodies
- Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) Boards
- Ward Committees

This policy is built around supporting all councillors in their particular roles, taking account of their diverse needs.

## The Aims

- To ensure that support is available enabling individuals to acquire and develop a full range of skills to maximise their ability and capacity to deliver
- To encourage councillors to take responsibility for their continuing professional development whilst reinforcing that they are key to enabling the Council to achieve its aims and objectives
- To clearly define corporate responsibilities for officers in relation to member training and development, including a named officer with a co-ordinating role
- To identify adequate resources to meet the objectives of the learning and development programme

In fulfilling these aims we will observe the following **key principles**:

- provide a planned approach to Member Development
- involve Councillors in their learning and development, from planning the learning programme through to delivery and evaluation
- maximise development opportunities for Councillors through partnership with other organisations and neighbouring authorities

- ensure that the contribution that member learning and development makes to meeting the Council's aims is evaluated and recognised
- support individual learning and development valuing and recognising the skills and experiences that councillors bring with them
- identify individual development needs through a focussed approach to personal development
- adopt a Member Development Programme with clear objectives and links to the aims of the Council, the roles and functions of members and the key changes affecting the Council's priorities
- deliver training and development in innovative ways to make the best use of the resources available to the Council;
- ensure that every member takes responsibility for their own learning and self development
- be flexible about the delivery of training and development, taking into account the diverse needs of individual councillors
- encourage and support mentoring both within party groups 'buddying' and by use of I&DeA peer mentors
- support members with caring responsibilities

## Supporting the Aims

The following resources and support will assist in delivering the aims and key principles of the Member Training & Development Strategy

### The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG)

The MDSG is made up of representatives from all parties who will oversee all Councillor training and development on behalf of the Council and will lead on the development of relevant strategies, policies and programmes for councillors.

Each member of the MDSG will act as an ambassador for training and development and positively support and encourage other Councillors to identify training needs and take advantage of development opportunities.

In particular the MDSG will:

- Ensure that a comprehensive induction programme in all appropriate Council functions and services is made available to all newly elected Councillors
- Ensure that all Councillors are encouraged to take part in a Personal Development Review (PDR) on an annual basis
- Ensure that an annual programme of development opportunities is provided meeting the identified needs through the PDR process and that delivery reflects individual learning style preferences
- Facilitate new approaches to learning and development and to encourage a culture of lifelong learning
- Review the Member Development Policy annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to support the Council's aims and the needs of Members
- Encourage the Council and all councillors to actively promote citizenship
- Encourage the Council to promote community leadership and Councillors to develop their roles as community leaders

## Member to Member Support

Members will be encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with fellow members, where appropriate, by:

- leading workshops
- supporting newly elected mentors (buddying)
- speaking at external conferences & seminars in their capacity as an elected member
- considering the opportunity to become an accredited peer with the ID&eA which involves mentoring elected members from outside the authority and being involved in the delivery ID&eA seminars and conferences

All of the above activities and opportunities can be explored through the personal development planning process. The benefits of engaging in such activities are considerable for those involved and are a valuable addition to Members' individual training profiles.

## Officer Support

Democratic Services will support training and development by:

- Providing the main support officer for all Councillor training and development, who is the Senior Member Support Officer, and ensuring that all members are clearly aware of training and development opportunities in good time;
- Providing officer support in relation to the preparation of agenda and minutes relating to meetings of the MDSG
- Providing 1-2-1 support to newly elected members as part of their planned induction programme
- Devising and delivering in consultation with the MDSG a programme of induction training for new Councillors
- Devising and delivering, in consultation with the MDSG, a comprehensive annual training and development programme for all Councillors based on the needs identified through PDR's and other essential training;
- Provide administrative support for all training and including communication with Members and provision of feedback to providers;
- Managing the member training budget in consultation with the Member Development Steering Group;
- Advising and assisting the MDSG in carrying out their role

## ITT Resources and Support

**ITT equipment:** is made available to each member upon election to enable:

- More effective communication with residents, the Council and it's partners
- The opportunity to explore e-learning/distance learning
- Self development opportunities e.g. researching information on the internet

**Broadband Connections:** are either paid on behalf of Members or reimbursed on a monthly basis depending on the broadband package.

**ITT support:** is made available via the Council's ITT helpdesk including out of hours assistance. Members also have access to the ITT on-line help facility.



## Budget

The Council allocates a Member Development Budget each year against which the MDSG monitors spending. In addition, from time to time regional funding is made available for specific areas of training and development, e.g. IT, mentoring etc. Where appropriate training and development opportunities will be opened up to neighbouring Council's at a nominal charge to help maximise resources.

Expenses incurred by Members attending training and development events will be reimbursed under the Members Scheme of Allowances and in accordance with an agreed protocol .

## Delivering Our Aims

Elected and co-opted Members have a diverse range of development needs and learning preferences which will be delivered through a range of options to both provide and promote that diversity. Whether delivered through the Council's internal expertise or through specialist external training providers, access to training will be offered as follows:

- Core programme courses
- Pre-Council Seminars, in-house briefings and workshops
- External conferences and seminars
- Written learning materials
- Peer mentors, political group/officer buddying
- E-Learning packages
- Study visits to other Councils or relevant partners
- Targeted training for newly elected Members
- Shadowing opportunities
- Sharing knowledge with other elected and co-opted Members
- Leadership development opportunities

Specifically, the key strategic elements are:

### Induction:

A **comprehensive induction programme of training** for every newly elected Councillors, enabling them to 'fast track', learning about the organisation and supported by the following:

- an induction day to meet key senior Councillors and Officers and learn more about corporate and constitutional processes
- a 1-2-1 with the Senior Member Support Officer to discuss the support available to them and to identify any individual needs or concerns confidentially;
- an induction pack setting out the entitlements, support and guidance available, together with other useful information about the Council and it's processes;
- a six month review (1-2-1) to check 'satisfaction' levels and to identify any areas of concern

### **Personal Development Reviews:**

- A personal development review (PDR) for all Councillors to identify individual needs in a safe and confidential environment with a trained consultant. A confident Councillor will naturally be more effective in taking forward the Council's improvement agenda and ensuring the delivery of strategic aims and priorities.
- An annual PDR review to check how the outcomes from the PDR have progressed and review individual development or training needs as a result of changes in roles, lifestyle or working practices;
- An annual review by MDSG relating to the personal development review process. Such a review will look at outcomes from the process and actual reviews undertaken and identify any key themes which need to be fed into the Annual Core Training & Development Programme for Councillors.

### **Core Annual Training & Development Programme:**

An annual core programme will be developed in consultation with the MDSG based on:

- identified needs from Personal Development Reviews (PDR's);
- the requirements of new legislation and emerging corporate themes;
- the Corporate Strategy and emerging corporate themes;
- ethical and governance requirements and changing standards;
- the impact of any scrutiny recommendations in terms of changing corporate practice;
- emerging themes or developments from partners

### **Seminars and External Conferences**

- Attendance at seminars and conferences to inform learning on specific and specialist subjects, for instance as an Executive or Scrutiny Member or serving on a particular Committee;
- A commitment from each groups elected representative on the Steering Group (MDSG) to gain feedback from group Councillors attending conferences etc, to assist in future proofing conferences/seminars;
- A protocol to manage attendance at external conferences/seminars will be overseen by the Steering Group (MDSG) to ensure the Member Development Budget is spent appropriately

## **Our Approach to Communicating and Raising Awareness**

Communicating the commitments set out in this policy is essential to delivering successful training and development for Members. This will be achieved through:

- The Steering Group creating a supportive environment in which all Members feel able to take part in and take control of their own learning and development ;
- The role of the Council's Management Team in reinforcing the Council's commitment to developing officers and Members alike and raising the profile and awareness of this policy and the commitments within it;
- The Senior Member Support Officer in providing advance notification of the core programme and events, involving and informing Members as early as possible and proactively seeking their engagement;
- Provision of IT&T, in terms of using the intranet and other means to provide ongoing information on the policy, the core programme, emerging training opportunities and the Council's evolving approach to developing Members.

## **Our Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation**

To be of real benefit, effective training has to try to match the needs of Members, the objectives of the organisation and its partners in achieving a shared vision for York.

It is essential therefore that all provision is reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation processes and outcomes will:

- be open and constructive, enabling any necessary enhancements to be made to future delivery;
- be regularly monitored by MDSG and Standards Committee, to ensure delivery of objectives and continuous improvement;
- be clearly communicated to Members and the public, through the reporting arrangements to MDSG and Standards Committee;
- set clear standards for achievement. Members will be required to attend a minimum number of training & development activities in a year (12 for Executive Members and 8 for non-Executive Members);
- ensure Members achievements are recognised and acknowledged both individually and within the political groups
- encourage Members to be self-aware in recognising their strengths and weaknesses;

Set out on the next page is the intended cycle of monitoring and evaluation arrangements

<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORTING CYCLE</b>			
<b>Review</b>	<b>Steering Group</b>	<b>Standards Cttee</b>	<b>Full Council</b>
<b>Annual review of policy</b>	October	November	December
<b>Bi-annual monitor of take-up and evaluation of events</b>	November	January	February
	May	June	July
<b>Annual budget monitor</b>	January	January	February
<b>Agree Member Development Programme</b>	March	April	April

## Looking to the Future

This policy presents a corporate approach for the provision and delivery of all elected Member training and development, setting out strategies for communicating, monitoring and evaluating training provision.

The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Member Development Steering Group to ensure that it appropriately reflects the Council's approach towards Member training and development and that provision continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its Members.