Member Training & Development Policy

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Support & Resources

Delivery of Training & Development   6

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 Councils 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 achieving the Council's agreed corporate priorities;
- Keeping up to date with new legislation and changing policies

Delivering the Council's Key Priorities

City of York Council's Council Plan sets out the Council's key priorities over the next four years from 2011 to 2015. As well as demonstrating to the city as a whole the work we are doing for our communities, the Plan also gives all teams in the council, however different in their day to day work, a shared purpose.

The Council Plan has five key priorities to:

- Create jobs/grow the economy
- Get York moving
- Build strong communities
- Protect vulnerable people
- Protect the environment

The Council recognises that one of the many factors in achieving its shared vision for the City is the provision of good quality training and development opportunities for both officers and Councillors. Our Councillors will be trained in any new corporate developments or initiatives which affect their roles and are material to achieving the key priorities under the Council 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:

- Cabinet
- Scrutiny
- Planning
- Licensing
- Standards or governance committees
- Outside Bodies
- Partnerships Boards (eg Without Walls)
- Ward Committees

Aims of the Policy

This policy is built around supporting all councillors in their particular roles, taking account of their diverse needs. It 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
- 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
- Ensure Council resources are available to enable the delivery of identified training and development needs for Members;
- Ensure a mechanism is in place for agreeing training needs with Members (eg. Member Support Steering Group)

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

- provide a planned approach to developing Members

- involve Members 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 Members bring with them
- adopt a Core Training & Development Programme for Members which addresses key needs, the overarching aims of the Council, as well as statutory, quasi-judicial and governance roles;
- deliver training and development in innovative ways to make the best use of the resources available to the Council;
- encourages every Member to take 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, where possible
- support Members with caring responsibilities

Support & Resources

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

The Member Support Steering Group (MSSG)

The MSSG is a cross party Group overseeing all Councillor training and development on behalf of the Council and leading on the development of relevant strategies, policies and programmes for councillors.
Each Member of the MSSG will act as an ambassador for training and development and positively support and encourage other Councillors to participate in essential or key learning activities.
In particular the MSSG will:

- **Ensure that a comprehensive induction programme covering all appropriate Council functions and services is made available to all newly elected Councillors**
- **Ensure opportunities are provided for Members to identify, through coaching, any specific training needs they may have**
- **Ensure that a core programme of training & development for Members is provided based on statutory, organisational or individual need**
- **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 and develop Councillors in their roles as community leaders**

Member to Member Support

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

- Supporting newly elected members (buddying)
- Speaking at external conferences and seminars in their capacity as an elected member
- Considering the opportunity to become an accredited peer with the Local Government Group which involves mentoring elected members from outside the authority and being involved in the delivery of Local Government Group seminars and conferences

Officer Support

Democratic Services will support training and development by:

- Compiling and administering a core programme of key, essential or statutory training requirements;
- 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 MSSG a programme of induction training for new Councillors
- Managing the Member training budget in consultation with the Member Support Steering Group, including the allocation of funds to each Group in relation to external training activities;
- Advising and assisting the MSSG in carrying out their role

Budget

The Council allocates a Member Development Budget each year against which the MSSG monitors spending. To encourage joint working with other local Councils and gain a small income from its Member Training Programme, the Council sometimes offers appropriate opportunities to neighbouring authorities at a nominal charge

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

ICT Resources and Support

ICT 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.

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

Delivery Of Training & Development

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, in some quantified cases, through specialist external training providers, access to training will be offered as follows:

- Core programme courses

- Written learning materials

- E-Learning packages

- Shadowing opportunities

- External conferences & seminars

- Peer mentors, political group/officer buddying

- Pre-Council Briefings, in-house briefings & workshops

- Study visits to other Councils or relevant partners

- Targeted induction training for newly elected Members

- Leadership development opportunities

- Sharing knowledge with other elected & co-opted Members

Sharing Learning

Attendance at external events is a valuable way of acquiring information about a wide range of issues including new and innovative practice, new legislation, and other regional and national developments. Increasingly, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and scrutiny Members are participating in a variety of external events. Under this policy, where appropriate, those Members are encouraged to share their learning and knowledge gained with other Members, through the new Members App ('Membersphere') or the Members E-Bulletin.

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;

- Democratic Services in providing advance notification, through the Members E-Bulletin and Membersphere, of the core programme and events, involving and informing Members as early as possible and proactively seeking their engagement

Key Strategic Elements
Induction:

- A comprehensive induction programme of training for every newly elected Councillor, 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 Democratic Services 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

A Core Programme:

- a focused programme of key statutory or essential training aimed at appropriate Members, addressing:
- legislative requirements or changes
- identified Council priorities
- core skills or roles, ie. quasi-judicial, scrutiny, corporate parenting, safeguarding, standards.

Developing Leadership:

One annually funded place on LGA Leadership Academy, based on criteria adopted by MSSG

Certificate in Local Government & Democracy

An accredited course delivered by University of York providing the skills, knowledge and learning required to help Members and the public to:

- o understand our democratic and civic origins;
- o appreciate the role of governance and the value of effective communication;
- o understand the issues affecting social need and the impact on future policy setting

This course is an opportunity to gain an accredited certificate in recognition of your public role as a democratically elected Councillor.

External Events

This policy acknowledges the value for Members in specified roles, eg Cabinet Members or Chairs of Committees, to attend external conferences etc relevant to their area. As far as the Member Development Budget will allow, Groups will be allocated 'pots' based on a per head allocation to fund participation in external activities by appropriate Members.

Under the terms of this policy, Members are encouraged to share any learning from such activities with other Members via 'Membersphere' or the E-Bulletin.

Arrangements for Monitoring & Evaluation

To be of real benefit, any training provided must be monitored for its appropriateness, relevance and effectiveness

. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be put in place and will:

- be open and constructive, enabling any necessary adjustments to be made to future delivery;
- be regularly monitored by MSSG, to ensure delivery of objectives and continuous improvement;
- be clearly communicated to Members and the public, through the reporting arrangements to MSSG;
- ensure Members achievements are recognised and acknowledged through reporting arrangements to MSSG

Review	Steering Group	Full Council
Annual review of policy	July	July
Monitor of take-up & Evaluation of events	November	
	March	
Findings Report to Deputy Leader	December April	

Annual budget monitor	January	
Agree Core Training Programme	March	

Looking to the Future

This policy establishes a framework for the provision and delivery of all elected Member training and development, setting out approaches for its key strategic elements and for communicating, monitoring and evaluating the provision.

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