MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2009-2010

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A Commitment

The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) has overseen the production of this strategy which aims to promote training and development opportunities for York's elected members.

It is essential that we have well trained and effective Members to act as Community Leaders, fulfilling their varying roles and furthering the Council's values and priorities set out in the refreshed Corporate Strategy for 2009-2012.

Member training and development plays an essential part in improving our effectiveness as an organisation and for this reason Member Training is identified as a key area in the Council's Improvement Plan.

The Council has signed up to Local government Yorkshire & Humber's Regional Member Development Charter and in doing so aims to improve the Council's approach to Member Training and Development and promote best practice.

To underpin the Council's commitment to developing members, the MDSG has developed a policy formed around the following principles of the 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

Through working together and listening each to the other the Council, MDSG and Members will ensure that:

- 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 are communicated in such a way as to give sufficient notice to attend

- adequate provision of resources is made available within budget for training and development opportunities

- all members undertake a 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 will be no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers to Members participating in training and development activities

- evaluation and feedback relating to development activities to be effectively monitored and reviewed ensuring the future provision of training and development remains relevant and to a high standard

- learning and development opportunities maximise members contribution to achieving our shared vision for the City.

This policy provides a framework for delivering learning and development in a diverse and engaging manner, making it easier for members to access what they need, when they need it.

Councillor Carol Runciman

Chair of Member Development Steering Group

Councillor Sian Wiseman

Member Development Steering Group

Councillor Julie Gunnell

Member Development Steering Group

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 Councils commitment to providing a consistent and structured approach towards developing and supporting members in:

- Carrying out their existing roles efficiently and effectively

- Preparing for future roles on an individual basis

- Undertaking their specific duties and responsibilities

- Keeping up to date with new legislation and changing policies

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 an responsive health and social care provision
- Effective Organisation – Improving further it's organisational standards to become a modern council and a great place to work

The council recognises that one of the many factors in achieving it's 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 must represent the best interests of their residents, the Council and the City working in partnership. In addition to being a ward councillor and leader of their community a councillor may be appointed to:

      a) The Executive
      b) Scrutiny
      c) Planning
      d) Standards or governance committees
      e) Outside Bodies
      f) Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) Boards

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 the following **key principles** will be observed:

- 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;
- Every member will take responsibility for their own learning and self development

- Being flexible about the delivery of training and development, taking into account the diverse needs of individual councillors
- Support mentoring both within party groups 'buddying' and by use of I&DeA peer mentors
- Members with caring responsibilities will be supported

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 a cross party body and is made up of representatives from the Executive, Scrutiny and Shadow Executive 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)

- 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

Elected and co-opted members will be encouraged to be involved in the development of fellow Members, where appropriate, by leading workshops, sharing knowledge and skills through buddying new members, becoming accredited peer mentors and using their expertise to speak at external seminars etc. Such activities can be explored through members Personal Development Reviews and successful completion of such activities will count as credits on their personal development profile.

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 one2one 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;

- 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 choice of 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 Resources

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.

Delivering Our Aims

Elected members 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. In many cases training can be through the Council's own resources, however, where necessary the council will identify and secure the services of specialist external training providers to deliver quality training to members.

Training & Development will be delivered in a variety of ways:

- 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
- Visits to other Councils or relevant partners

- Shadowing opportunities
- Sharing knowledge with other elected and co-opted Members
- Leadership development opportunities

Specifically, the following will be provided:

Induction:

- A **comprehensive induction programme** for every newly elected Councillor, enabling them to 'fast track' learning about the organisation. This includes:
- a **one2one** 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;

- an **induction day** to meet key senior Councillors and Officers and learn more about corporate and constitutional processes

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 for Councillors:

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

- identified needs from Councillor 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

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 role of the Steering Group (MDSG) in helping to create an environment in which all Members feel able to take part in and take control of their own learning and development

- The role of Council 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;

- IT&T, in terms of using the intranet and other means to provide ongoing information on the policy, the core programme and on what's happening.

Monitoring & Evaluation

To be of benefit, any training has to match the needs of Members, the objectives of the organisation and what is required to achieve the shared vision, with others, for the City.
It is essential therefore that all provision is reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. This must be an honest and constructive assessment, so that any necessary improvements/enhancements can be made to future delivery. The delivery and provision of the Training and Development will be monitored and evaluated throughout to ensure it promotes continuous improvement.

This will be supported by:

- An evaluation framework
- The Member Development Steering Group
- The Standards Committee
- Self regulation

Looking to the Future

This policy is intended to be a common framework for the provision of all elected member training and development. The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Member Development Steering Group to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its Members