

Member Development Steering Group - Policy Statement

The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) has overseen the development of a policy aimed at promoting training and development opportunities for York's members. For the purposes of this policy the term 'members' applies to the Authority's elected members along with any independent and co-opted members of Council bodies.

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 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.

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 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
- Standards or governance committees
- Outside Bodies
- Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) Boards
- 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:

- 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

Support & Resources

The following 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 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 members (buddying)
- speaking at external conferences & 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 Local Government Group seminars and conferences

Officer Support

Democratic Services will support training and development by:

- Providing the main support officer for all Councillor training and development 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 PDRs 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

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 Councils 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.

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.

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 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 training for newly elected Members
- Leadership development opportunities
- Sharing knowledge with other elected & co-opted Members

Promoting the Dissemination of Learning

Promoting the Dissemination of Learning is a requirement of the Local Government Group Member Development Charter. 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.

It will therefore be expected that, wherever appropriate, Members who attend external events will lodge with the Members' Library any course information, handouts, etc. In addition, any Member attending external events must be prepared to provide a short written report as a minimum requirement, and where appropriate to provide briefing sessions to other Members in order to pass on information or learning that has been acquired.

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 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 continuing approach to developing Members.

Key Strategic Elements

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 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 its 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

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

Arrangements for 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 Cabinet Members and 8 for non-Cabinet 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;

Review	Steering Group	Full Council
Annual review of policy	October	December
monitor of take-up of events	November	
	March	July
monitor of evaluation of events	November	
	March	
Annual budget monitor	January	
Agree Member Development Programme	March	

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.

Protocol for Councillor Attendance at Conferences & External Training & Development Events

This protocol applies specifically to external conferences or events which it may be appropriate for Members to attend but which fall outside of the Core Annual Training & Development for Members. . Attendance at party political conferences are specifically excluded from this protocol and all expenses associated with attendance at these events will be met by the relevant group or the individual concerned.

External conferences, seminars and events governed by this Protocol usually fall within three categories:

- 1 Conferences which are included on the list of Annual Conferences (see Annex 1 to this protocol) This is a guide provided to Members indicated which annual conferences in service areas the Council would consider advantageous for Members in specific roles to attend;
- 2 Conferences/events received directly by individual members from an external source.
- 3 Local, regional or national Conferences reported to Democratic Services through networks, the Local Government Group, the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) etc.

Conferences largely result from changes in legislation or forthcoming new initiatives emerging locally, regionally or nationally. Often the subject matter is of particular value to Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or backbench Members working on topical scrutiny reviews. Under the terms of this protocol and to ensure appropriate Members have the opportunity to attend conferences or events key to their learning, each of the 4 Groups on the Council retains a 'conference pot' from which expenses for their Members attending such external events will be met.

'Conference Pot'

This 'pot' will be provided from the overall Member Development Budget managed by the Head of Civic & Democratic Services. For the financial year 2012/13, the 'pot' will amount to £5k and will be allocated to Groups on the following percentile basis:

Labour Group:	50% (£2,500)
Conservative Group:	20% (£1,000)
Liberal Democrat Group:	20% (£1,000)
Green Group + Independent	10% (£500)

Spend from the 'pot' allocated to each Group will be managed and agreed by the Group. The Group's representative on the Member Development Steering Group will be responsible for informing Democratic Services when a Member has been 'authorised' to attend a 'conference or external event', providing details of the event, costs and travel or subsistence arrangements. Democratic Services will then make the necessary booking and travel/subsistence arrangements.

Under this Protocol it is recognised that Groups with Cabinet Members will need to prioritise some spend from their 'allocation' on Cabinet Members, since many external conferences/events are increasingly aimed at Cabinet Members and key officers. Cabinet Members being responsible for a significant amount of expenditure on behalf of the Council and for making key decisions. It would therefore be appropriate for some weighting to be given by Groups on Cabinet Members as part of their allocation. This equally applies to Group Leaders, who are heavily involved in the strategic development of the Council and need to keep their learning and development at an appropriately 'high' level.

The remainder of the Member Development Budget will be managed by the Head of Civic & Democratic Services for the provision of a Core Programme and in election years, an induction programme aimed at newly elected Members.

Groups cannot overspend their 'allocation' under the terms of this Protocol, since the budget is actually managed overall by the Head of Civic & Democratic Services. Any requests to overspend will be reported to the Member Development Steering Group and the overall budgetary implications will be identified.

Joint Funding

Funding for any external conferences, etc, agreed under the terms of this Protocol and as provided by the 'pot', will still be met in part from the 'pot' and in part from the relevant Service Directorate. This is operated on a 50-50 matched funding basis and covers all associated costs under travel and subsistence.

Annual Conferences 2010/11

This list is a guide detailing conferences held during 2010/11 covering Council service and performance areas. Members may find the list useful to assist in prioritising an appropriate ad-hoc training opportunity in accordance with the agreed protocol.

Executive Portfolios		
Portfolio Holder	Conference	When does it usually take place?
Leader (Economic Development & Community Safety)	Institute of Economic Development annual Conference	October
	LGA Safer Communities Annual Conference	October
City Strategy	Car Free Cities	June/July
	PTRC (formerly Planning & Transport Research and Computation)	May
Corporate Services	CIPFA Annual Conference	June
Housing & Adult Social Services	National Children & Adult Services Conference	November
	Institute of Housing Annual Conference	June
Children and Young People	National Children & Adult Services Conference	November
	North of England Education Conference	January
	Positive Activities for Young People	December
Neighbourhood Services	Environmental Health Annual Conference	February
	Annual Climate Change Conference	January
	Trading Standards Annual Conference	February
Leisure Culture & Social Inclusion	PLA (Public Libraries Association)	April/May
	LGA Annual Conference for Culture, Tourism and Sport	March

GENERAL INTEREST

Members on Planning	When does it usually take place?
English Historic Towns Forum	January/February
RTPI Planning Convention	June
Planning Summer School	August/September

Members on Scrutiny	When does it usually take place?
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	June/July

Members on Standards	When does it usually take place?
Standards Board for England Annual Conference	October

Members on Social Inclusion	When does it usually take place?
Inside Government's Annual Social Inclusion Conference	October
Annual Conference Delivering Services for Gypsies and Travellers <i>(may also be of interest to members with Gypsy/Travellers sites within their ward)</i>	March

Ward Member Role	When does it usually take place?
LGIU & Municipal Journal National Conference for Councillors (Cllr '10')	February