

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2.	Date:-	9 th September 2013
3.	Title:-	Revised Member Development Strategy 2013
4.	Directorate:-	Resources

5. Summary

The Member Development strategy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the current priorities and direction of the council and recent developments in management of Member development needs.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Agree the revised Member Development Strategy**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Updating

The Member Development Strategy (appendix 1) has been refreshed to reflect the current priorities of the Council and changing government agendas. In particular, the revised priorities as set out in the draft Corporate Plan have been included.

The core programme has been updated to reflect the various roles of Members and the challenges presented in terms of Member skills and knowledge and as set out in the Member Skills Profile. Development may be provided by a range of means, including local and regional/sub-region provision.

8. Finance

Development provision outlined in the Strategy is provided by a range of means. To enable lowest-cost provision, sub-regional commissioning of training is used as appropriate. Development is subject to the panels' approval of spend from the dedicated Member development budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Councils in the region (and particularly in the sub-region) will endeavour to maintain a range of opportunities for Members by working together and sharing provision to enable continued provision, now that regional funding is not available to support such activity.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Development of Members enables them to carry out their respective roles and help keep Members updated on national and local policy issues.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix 1 – Member Development Strategy 2013.

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Appendix 1

**Member Development Strategy
2013 -2016**

Profile of the Council

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is a Labour controlled Council. It has 63 Councillors, comprising 57 Labour Members, 4 Conservative, 1 Independent and 1 UK Independence Party. The Council political management structure is that of a Strong Leader with Cabinet. There are four overview and scrutiny select commissions, with an overarching Management Board. There are also 7 area assemblies which operate at a local level.

1. Why have a Member Development Strategy?

People are key to the Council achieving improvement in its services and being representative of their communities. It is essential that we have the **right people**, with the **right skills** in the **right place** at the **right time** to maintain and improve existing and future services. This needs to be addressed across all of the Council, including Members. The Member Development Strategy aims to ensure members are properly supported and have the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

2. Priorities

Rotherham Council is committed to continuous improvement as a commissioner and provider of services to local people, and as an employer. It recognises that people are its' biggest and most valuable asset and are key to achieving the vision and priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013.

The most important priorities are (Draft Corporate Plan 2013):

- Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work
- Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence
- All areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained
- Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within the borough

Additionally, through our business values (The Way We Do Business) the Council will ensure that its resources (including the workforce) are utilised to best effect by:

- Talking and listening to all our customers and treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Supporting and enabling our communities to help themselves, whilst meeting the needs of the most vulnerable
- Getting it right first time, reducing bureaucracy and getting better value for money
- Working with partners to ensure people get the services and support they need as early as possible
- Having the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

This is undoubtedly a challenging time for the public sector and business in general. The climate within which we work, with more limited resources, means that inevitably the workforce has to adapt to new ways of working with less resources. Decisions are required about reductions in services, commissioning of services etc. The Council is examining the ways in which it can become a modern, thriving Council, recognising the limited budget available for the foreseeable future, the need to address areas of deprivation in the Borough and take a lead from the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This means consideration of new models of delivery, new partnerships, tailoring of services, focus on job creation, prevention and early intervention.

Government policy changes are also driving changes to the way we work, e.g. Welfare Reform and the work programme, Council tax changes, management of place, public health and changing health management arrangements, personalisation and choice, skills agenda and development of future business skills, transparency of spending (including pay), reduction in inspections, changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme and self-management of performance.

2.1 Member's Skills Profile

The results of this challenge have provided expectations that Elected Members will:

- Engage with members of their community in order to learn about areas of concern for the local area and help to build a vision for the locality;
- Encourage trust and respect between individuals and groups, mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and community sectors;
- Build good relationships with others by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals;
- Recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required and take a long term view in developing partnerships;
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language;
- Communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of the community;
- Develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision and encourage democratic processes and public engagement;
- Act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny both inside and outside the Council and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others;
- Understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions;
- Perform regulatory functions which ensure that community needs and aspirations are both met and protected;

- Work with a full range of partners to set policies and targets to secure positive outcomes for the area and community; challenging results and progress through both Cabinet and scrutiny functions.

The Member Development Strategy provides for Members of the Council to be equipped with the skills and experience to meet these challenges and secure an excellent performing Council for the benefit of Rotherham as a whole.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Elected Members

All Elected Members are responsible for helping to identify their own development needs and are encouraged to take part in the Personal Development Planning Process, including self-assessment of their knowledge and skills using the Members Skills Profile.

The Deputy Leader of the Council is the nominated Member Development Champion and Chair of the Member Training and Development Panel.

3.2 Officers

The importance of Member Development is recognised in the Council through the provision of support from officers within the Scrutiny Services team, supported by colleagues within Human Resources.

3.3 Member Training and Development Panel

The purpose of the Member Training and Development Panel is to provide a cross-party group of Elected Members, who, supported by relevant officers, will formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate Member Development for the Council.

3.4 The Council

The Council is responsible for ensuring adequate resources are available to ensure an effective training and development programme can be delivered, as well as offering practical support and encouragement to all Elected Members.

4. The Programme

4.1 Core Development Programme

The Elected Member Development Programme recognises the different roles of Members and the needs that arise with changes at a national, regional, sub regional and local level.

The programme will be based on local priorities as identified in the Council's corporate plan and Members individual skills needs identified through the personal development planning and self-assessment process.

The programme will incorporate a blended approach to Member Development, using a variety of methods of delivery, including e-learning. This will suit the needs of different learners, as well as make learning more accessible to Members. Up to date information on the current programme can be viewed on the Members Learning and Development intranet site.

Based on a review of learning needs, the programme will comprise:

Need	Key areas	Learning methods
Local Leadership	Understanding case work and e-case work The role of Councillors Ethical frameworks	Awareness sessions Online resources E-learning Internal resources Online resources
Partnership Working	Working in partnership with others Community engagement Equality and Diversity	Online Resources Networking opportunities Representation at briefing sessions Working in the community E-learning Internal resources
Communication Skills	Confidence in public speaking Making a positive contribution to meetings Chairing skills Written skills E agenda Media Relations Data protection	E-learning Training Online resources Awareness sessions
Political Understanding	Political skills Understanding how the council works & local government	Online resources Awareness sessions Internal resources
Scrutiny and challenge	Understanding the purpose of overview and scrutiny Key skills for overview and scrutiny	Awareness sessions Training Online resources
Regulating and monitoring	Understanding legislation Performance management Financial management Key skills for regulating and monitoring	Awareness sessions E-learning Online resources Workshops Training
Providing vision (cabinet members, advisers and aspiring leaders)	Understanding and delivering an effective portfolio	Training Online resources

4.2 Induction

A comprehensive induction programme for newly Elected Members is delivered following each local election. The aim of the induction programme is to help new Members familiarise themselves with the authority and their new role and covers three main areas:

Getting to know the Council

Getting to know your Area

Getting to know your Role

The Member Training and Development Panel has an input into the content and delivery of the induction programme to ensure that it meets the needs of newly Elected Members and those Members with new roles / responsibilities.

All newly Elected Members receive an induction pack after the election. This provides valuable information on the day to day running of the Council, the support services available, contact details of support staff and a copy of the Local Government Association Guide for New Councillors.

4.3 Members Handbook

The Members Handbook will provide key information for newly Elected Members and will help to support the induction process.

The Handbook is accessible online via the Members' Homepage Intranet site.

4.4 Political Mentoring

In addition to the induction programme, Members can be supported in their political roles through peer mentoring.

Experienced Councillors from each political group can act as mentors to newly Elected Members and those taking on new roles / responsibilities, providing the skills needed as well as the political, public and organisational expectations placed on Elected Members.

5. External Development

All Elected Members are provided with external development opportunities, if these cannot be offered in-house.

5.1 Conferences / Events/ Individual Requests

Attendance at national, regional and local conferences and events is encouraged and details are circulated to Members with a specific responsibility on that subject. Individual request for attendance at events is considered in accordance with Training Support Principles agreed by the Member Training and Development Panel.

5.2 Leadership Academy

The LGA Leadership Academy is a dedicated programme that provides Members with the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge quickly in order to meet the challenges of local government.

The Member Development budget supports Members attendance on this programme in agreement with the Member Training and Development Panel.

5.3 Regional Mentoring

One-to-One peer member mentoring is offered to group leaders, cabinet and shadow cabinet members who want to develop their role and improve their overall political leadership and personal development.

5.4 Regional Working

A Member Development Officer attends the Regional Member Development conference facilitated by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH).

The group is made up of authorities within the Yorkshire and Humber region and provides opportunities to avoid duplication of resources and efforts by looking at what development sessions can be delivered regionally / sub regionally.

A South Yorkshire group also looks at shared provision locally, to provide the most cost-effective delivery of commissioned training.

5.5 Good Practice Visits

Members are encouraged to learn from others and share their experiences by visiting other authorities that can demonstrate good practice in specific areas.

The aim of these visits is to increase the knowledge, improve the performance and support the Members in their specific roles.

6. Personal Development Planning

A Personal Development Plan is a written plan of commitment by an individual to their development as a Councillor over a two year cycle. Personal Development Planning provides tangible evidence of the Council and individual commitments to building Elected Member capacity.

All Elected Members are invited to take part in the personal development planning process which is encouraged and supported by the Member Training and Development Panel. This process will:

- Enable Members to reflect on their skills and knowledge against the Member Skills Profile and in relation to work experiences.
- Provide Members with the opportunity to attend a personal development interview with an Officer to discuss their individual development needs in respect of their roles and responsibilities.

- Enable production a group training plan which will identify and prioritise shared training and development needs and highlight new areas of development required and the number of Members requiring development.
- Be informally reviewed to ensure needs have been met.

To ensure the process is effective a target of 80% completed Personal Development Plans on two-yearly cycle is set.

7. Evaluation

It is essential that all Member Development activities are evaluated to ensure their effectiveness in terms of delivery, quality and value for money.

Evaluation of the Member Development programme will take place in a number of different ways to measure the impact of each activity:

- i) Members are asked to complete evaluation sheets at the end of each session to review the session and assess future impact.
- ii) The Member Training and Development Panel reviews the training programme on a 6 monthly basis based on feedback from evaluation forms and Members who attended the course. This provides the mechanism for suggestions for improvements.