



Councillor Training and Development Statement of Intent 2019/2023

Introduction

Councillor training and development is valued at Lancaster City Council. This *Statement of Intent* sets out the principles that underpin councillor training and development at the council.

Commitment

Lancaster City Council is committed to giving councillors the equal opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise to drive forward the council's agenda, accomplish the outcomes set out in the Council Plan and to become effective ward councillors.

It is the underlying premise of this *Statement of Intent* that councillor training and development will support the council in achieving its priorities by enabling councillors to increase their potential as decision-makers, community representatives and community leaders.

Identifying Development Needs and Priorities

Councillors are responsible for, and will have a direct input into, their own development and training.

Councillors are expected to attend a number of training and development events each year, including briefings and the mandatory training events that relate to their committee membership.

Access to Learning

The council recognises that councillors come from a variety of backgrounds, with different skills, experiences, knowledge and expertise in a wide range of subject areas, and that each councillor may have different learning and development needs and different learning styles.

No councillor should be disadvantaged by their previous work, life or learning experience in the way learning and development opportunities are offered and accessed.

No councillor will be disadvantaged by their race or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation or any other reason that cannot be objectively justified.

The council will respond positively to reasonable requests from councillors regarding how development opportunities can be made more accessible. In addition, the opportunities provided by e-learning will be explored.

The members' allowances scheme includes provision for allowances, including carer's allowance, to be claimed when attending training to reduce barriers that may otherwise exist.

Course materials from the core training programme will be made available to all councillors via the *For Councillors* section of the council's intranet, and councillors will be notified when new materials are made available.

Councillors will be able to access external training courses, where these are relevant to their role as a Cabinet Member Committee Chair or Vice-Chair, and can be made available within the existing budget.

Councillors who attend external training courses will be encouraged to share course materials and what they have learnt in an appropriate manner.

The Council will explore options for electronic delivery of learning to meet councillors' needs, where it can complement other methods.

The Council will engage in joint provision of development opportunities with other authorities when this is beneficial in terms of cost-effectiveness or the shared learning experience.

The Council has declared a Climate Change 'emergency' and Democratic Services will provide councillors with the ICT training to enable the rolling out of a new paperless system.

Support for New Councillors

The support provided to new councillors will build on that which has been provided prior to, and following, previous elections, as follows:

- A successful candidate pack, which will give brief information on the council, its political and officer structure, the role of a councillor and meeting dates. This has always been a paper pack and Democratic Services will look to provide as much of this as possible electronically in the future.
- A comprehensive induction programme will be provided to ensure that newly-elected councillors can quickly participate fully in the business of the council.
- Councillors who have been elected at by-elections will be provided with a similar induction programme and support.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation of the programme of councillor training and development will be undertaken as follows:

- Wherever possible, councillors will be asked to provide feedback after each training session. Councillors who attend externally provided courses will be encouraged to provide feedback on those courses to ensure value for money is obtained.
- During the period covered by this Statement of Intent, at least one councillor training and support satisfaction survey will be undertaken regarding the training and development provided.

Evaluation and feedback will be analysed and will inform the process and provision of councillor training, and will shape future policies in this respect.

Other Councillor Training and Development Support

The Council recognises that effective councillor training and development includes support and opportunities. The Council will therefore provide the following to councillors:

- Advice and support within Democratic Services.
- Access to IT equipment, information, stationery and office space in the members' rooms at both town halls.
- Access to relevant council, and other, information electronically through the *For Councillors* pages on the intranet.

- IT equipment for use away from the council offices, as set out in the *Members' Computer Usage Agreement and Policy*, and support in how to make best use of this or councillors' own IT equipment.

Information will be gathered about the services provided by different tiers of council, and other information that councillors require and their preferred methods for accessing that information.

Delivering the Statement of Intent

The Council Business Committee will have a key role in ensuring that the aims and actions set out in this Statement of Intent are delivered. The Council Business Committee will:

- Champion and encourage councillor training and development.
- Provide a strategic overview of councillor training and development and ensure that provision is in-line with the council's aims and objectives and corporate priorities.
- Monitor the ongoing provision and take-up of all aspects of training and development and support for councillors.
- Provide a mechanism for the consideration and approval of training and development where there are competing requests.
- Monitor expenditure within the member training budget.

Responsibility for arranging the effective and efficient delivery of training and development activities for councillors, including liaising with internal and external training providers, lies within Democratic Services.