



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

# Member Development Strategy

2007/08 – 2010/11



# 1. Commitment to Member development

The Council took the decision in 2002 to commit to its own internal Charter for training and development for elected Members and employees. Following that the Council then signed up to the North West Charter for elected Member development.

To formalise this commitment, the Council included within the Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee, responsibility for Member development. As Members of this Committee, Councillors have the responsibility to champion Member Development and cascade information to their political groups. Members of the Council Business Committee are:



Councillor Susan Bray



Councillor Morgwn Trolinger



Councillor Shirley Burns



Councillor Karen Leytham



Councillor Geoff Knight



Councillor Joyce Pritchard



Councillor Rob Smith

## 2. Member Development Strategy

A Member Development Strategy was developed by Members and adopted by the full Council in February 2007 which set out the various ways of supporting Members in the Town Hall and their Wards. The Strategy also set out the development priorities during 2006/07.

The Strategy has been reviewed to reflect the new learning priorities of Members and will once again set out the direction and resources and support available for Members for 2007/08 onwards.

The Council Business Committee has considered the information that had been gathered from the 34 one to one interviews that have taken place since the elections in May 2007 and an informal workshop that was held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 where the Council Business Committee and many other Members considered what was important to them.

Using this together with feedback from training and induction events plus anecdotal comments, the themes that emerged were then considered alongside the Member training budget and the following Corporate Priorities:

- ❖ To deliver value for money, customer focused services.
- ❖ To make our district a cleaner and healthier place.
- ❖ To reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- ❖ To lead the regeneration of our District.
- ❖ To support sustainable communities.
- ❖ To continue to improve the Council.

With the election of 16 new Councillors this year, the Strategy is even more important to ensure that the Council provides the proper guidance and relevant support to all Members.

Whilst the Strategy is relevant to the Council's current position and priorities, these priorities are being reconsidered as part of the Corporate Plan 2008/09 and this element will therefore be reviewed again in Spring 2008 to ensure it continues to be aligned to the Council's priorities. The annual review will then take place at that time each year when the following year's priorities have been agreed and resources allocated.

In terms of budget allocation for Member Development, the Strategy goes beyond 2010/11 when the current term of office ends so that budgets set for future years as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy can be programmed to deliver appropriate training and development each year as Members' experience and knowledge grows.

### **3. Learning and Development Priorities and Projects**

As Champions for Member Development, the Council Business Committee have developed the Member Development Strategy and identified the following six key development priorities:

- ❖ Local Government Finance
- ❖ Overview and Scrutiny
- ❖ Communications (including media)
- ❖ IT training
- ❖ Decision Making Process (including County Council functions)
- ❖ Ward and Community Leadership

It was also recognised that there were several other topics that had been identified in the one to one interviews and workshop that should be included as lower priority areas. It was noted that the support for newly elected Councillors, Cabinet Members and those with full time commitments were cross cutting themes and should be reflected within the 6 identified key training priorities. Included on the next page is a detailed summary of each priority.

A revised edition of the Elected Member Training and Development Programme will be issued in 2008 based on these priorities.

#### **Projects**

In addition to the key priority of IT training, it was agreed that a project area could be to develop the use of IT by Members and promote web pages for Councillors. As part of this project, a future meeting of the Council Business Committee will include a webpage training session and trial a paperless meeting to increase the use of IT by Members.

In addition to the key priority of Ward and Community Leadership, it was recognised that this need could be addressed by means of a project to develop the access to Ward and Council information and this could complement any formal training in this area.

There is also a need to further develop different approaches to learning such as shadowing, mentoring, online e-learning and the Members Library to include a wider range of topics.

Included in the Training and Development Programme will be key dates in the development of these projects.

## Member Development Priorities

### Ward and Community Leadership

Managing Ward/Casework  
Lone Working  
Community Engagement & Gov White Paper  
More information relating to Wards  
Running effective surgeries  
Role of Parish and Town Councils  
Contacts and locations of Council Offices & Officers  
Understanding of Political & Officer Management structure

### Communications

Media training  
Speaking in public  
Leadership Academy  
Chairing Skills  
Dealing with confrontational people  
Dealing with conflict and heated meetings  
Speed reading

### IT Training

General IT training  
Software

### Decision Making Process

Role of Parish and Town Councils  
Understanding of Political and Officer Management structure  
Local Authority Legislation  
Civic and Ceremonial procedures  
Protocols for Personnel, Licensing, Planning & Appeals  
Legislation and issues for Personnel Committee  
Planning Committee  
Licensing Regulatory Committee  
Process of making a decision  
Understanding procedures at meetings, constitution & protocols  
Chairing Skills  
How City and County work in tandem  
Knowledge of role and functions of County Council  
Contact list of County Council Officers & Councillors

### Local Government Finance

Procurement  
Understanding budgets  
Understanding Local Government Finance

### Low Priority areas

Glossary of abbreviations and jargons  
What Members can ask for & who to ask  
Community Strategy, Council Vision & Corporate Objectives  
Young People  
Youth and Voluntary Organisations  
Community & Voluntary Sector Issues  
Partnership working  
LSP & Vision Board  
Member Development  
Council's Complaints Procedure  
Group Administrators Role  
Civil Contingencies  
Time Management & Managing Information  
Stress Awareness  
Equalities  
Council Housing  
Climate Change

### Overview and Scrutiny

Task Groups  
Escendency  
Overview and Scrutiny in general  
Budget and Performance Panel  
Questioning techniques  
Performance Management

## 4. Progress

To complement the commitment to the Council has made to Member Development, staff resources have been re-allocated with Democratic Services. These extra resources have enabled the following achievements and successes over the last couple of years:

- ❖ A Member Training Programme was developed setting out a schedule of training and development events and briefings and the opportunity to attend joint training with Blackpool and Fylde Councils. A total of 77 events have been held since May 2007 as part of the Induction Programme.
- ❖ Members have the facility to borrow publications, books and cd-roms from the Members Library and have a Member and/or Officer mentor/buddy.
- ❖ An Induction Programme was developed and implemented to enable Members to visit council departments, tour the district, enjoy taster sessions and Freshers fair style introductions. In addition, handbooks were developed for all Members and for Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Members. Social evenings were also held for Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Members.
- ❖ An information pack was produced and an open evening held for potential councillors
- ❖ Personalised one to one IT training has been offered including using email, internet, web pages and Microsoft Word and IT drop in - workshops
- ❖ 37 Members had one to one interviews in 2006, with some reviews in early 2007 and 34 Members have again had one to one interviews following the elections in May 2007.
- ❖ E-newsletters produced for Members advising them of the support available.
- ❖ 6 members have attended the IDEA Leadership Academy
- ❖ A dedicated area on the intranet has been created for Members containing useful documents and links
- ❖ There has been dedicated budgets in 2007/08 of £14,500 for Member Development with an additional budget for attendance at conferences which stands at £5,600 which is divided into four sections in order to ensure more widespread conference attendance by Group Leaders, Cabinet, Regulatory and Standing Committees and Overview and Scrutiny.
- ❖ All Councillors have either a Council provided laptop or access to the Council's computer system via Netilla.

## 7. Officer Support

All Members of the Council will receive support to enable them to be effective in their role as a Councillor. Members' Services can offer day to day support, and together with Democratic Support they are co-ordinating the Member Development process. The key officers to contact are:

Lisa Jackson  
Ceremonial and Members' Officer  
Tel: (01524) 582070  
Email: [ljackson@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:ljackson@lancaster.gov.uk)

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Assistant Ceremonial and Members' Officer  
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Suzie Smith  
Senior Democratic Support Officer  
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