



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

# Member Development Strategy

2007/08 – 2010/11



Revised June 2008

# 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 Rob Smith (Chairman)



Councillor Susan Bray (Vice-Chairman)



Councillor Morgwn Trolinger



Councillor Evelyn Archer



Councillor Karen Leytham



Councillor Geoff Knight



Councillor Joyce Pritchard

## 2. Member Development Strategy

The first Member Development Strategy for Lancaster City Council was developed by Members and adopted by the full Council in February 2007. This set out the various ways of supporting Members in the Town Hall and their Wards as well as the Council's development priorities for the coming year.

The Strategy included a commitment to undertake an annual review and with the election of 16 new Councillors in 2007, it was recognised that an up to date Strategy is even more important to ensure that the Council provides the proper guidance and relevant support to all Members.

The Council Business Committee considered the information gathered from the 34 one to one interviews which had then taken place since the elections in May 2007 and an informal workshop that was held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 where they 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 Corporate Priorities in place at that time.

The Strategy was further reviewed by the Council Business Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008 to reflect the issues that had emerged from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) reported earlier in the year and the new Corporate Priorities set by full Council for 2008/09 as follows:

- ❖ Ensure cost effective services that give good value for money
- ❖ Provide customer focused, accessible services
- ❖ Make our district a cleaner and healthier place
- ❖ Contribute to a safer society
- ❖ Lead the regeneration of our District
- ❖ Support sustainable communities and action on climate change
- ❖ Give local communities more influence and involvement in the way their services are delivered and decisions that affect them are made

This therefore is a revised edition of the Elected Member Training and Development Programme agreed as a result of that review.

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

As Champions for Member Development, Members of the Council Business Committee have developed the Member Development Strategy and identified the following eight key development priorities (in no particular order):

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

It is also recognised that there are several other topics identified in one to one interviews and workshops 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 8 identified key training priorities.

#### **Projects**

In addition to addressing priority needs by means of the training and development programme it is recognised that action on a number of key priorities can be better delivered by means of projects to look at improving the way things are done or support provided.

The following project areas will be developed during the life of this Strategy:

- The use of IT by members, including paperless meetings and the promotion of web pages for Councillors
- Improved access to Ward and Council information
- Development of political leadership, in particular improvements to induction and support for Cabinet Members. Consultation with existing and former Cabinet Members will be undertaken as part of this project.
- Community engagement.

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.

## 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  
Political Leadership  
Community Engagement

### 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 Processes

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

### Lower 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  
Council's Complaints Procedure  
Group Administrators Role  
Civil Contingencies  
Time Management & Managing Information  
Stress Awareness  
Equalities  
Council Housing  
Climate Change  
Community Safety /MAPS & role of Members

### 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 the Council has made to Member Development, staff resources have been re-allocated within Democratic Services. This has enabled the following achievements and successes:

- ❖ 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 121 events have been held since May 2007 as part of the Induction Programme and Member Development 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.
- ❖ E-newsletters are produced for Members advising them of the support available.
- ❖ 6 Members have attended the IDEA Leadership Academy.
- ❖ All Council Business Committee meetings are now paperless.
- ❖ Approximately 18 Members have now set up their own web page.
- ❖ A dedicated area on the intranet has been created for Members containing useful documents, links and ward information.
- ❖ A total of £14,400 is available in 2008/09 to support member development activity.
- ❖ An approval and monitoring system has been set up to ensure that attendance at any training events including seminars and conferences aimed at personal improvement is prioritised and funding properly targeted in accordance with this Strategy

## Members' comments

Listed here is just some of the positive feedback Members have provided on different training and development events:

*Excellent overall*

Cllr Jane Fletcher

*Excellent. Very practical and useful, but delivered in a supportive atmosphere.*

Cllr Jude Towers

### Facing the Media

*Excellent session  
– thanks*

*A well constructed and delivered course*

### Polish Taster Session

*Useful and practical*

Cllr Ian McCulloch

*Enjoyable*

Cllr Ken Brown

### Speed Reading

*Valuable*

Cllr Roger Dennison

### Neighbourhood Management Briefing

*More training events  
like these are  
needed*

*Spot on !*

## **5. One to One Interviews**

All Members have been offered a one to one interview to assess their training and development needs. A Personal Development Plan is produced for each Councillor and the information from these is used not only to monitor the personal progress of the individual but to develop the priorities for inclusion in this Strategy and Training Programme.

A system has been set up to review each Member's Personal Development Plan after a period of 12 months.

These are done to suit the individual either by means of a further face to face interview, a telephone discussion or by email.

To date, 49 out of 60 Councillors have taken the opportunity to have a one to one interview and where these were done over 12 months ago their Personal Development Plans are under review.

## **6. Attendance at Seminars/Conferences**

It has been identified that attendance at some Conferences and Seminars provides an opportunity for Members to further their personal development in terms of their knowledge and ability to perform particular roles. Control over the funding for this purpose has been transferred to the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Council Business Committee where the cost is in excess of £100 per Member and subject to the needs of the individual Member being identified in their personal development plan.

Members wishing to attend such Conferences need therefore to send details to the Head of Democratic Services for approval to enable funding to be allocated.

Certain annual conferences have been highlighted for attendance on an annual basis, subject to the continued relevance and evaluation of the content of the conferences.

## **7. Member Development Budget**

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.

The Head of Democratic Services has been given delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman of the Council Business Committee to approve attendance on external training courses/Conferences/Seminars. When the event/course costs



more than £100 the member will be expected to provide a report on their return for evaluation purposes.

## **8. Statutory and Mandatory Training**

It is acknowledged that there will on occasions be a need for training required to ensure Members understand legislative requirements on them both as individuals and as members of particular committees to be repeated and updated, particularly where new legislation is introduced. This will be included in the training programme by the Head of Democratic Services as the need arises.

## **9. 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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Jenny Kay  
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