



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Member Development Strategy

2009/10 – 2010/11



Version 4.00 September 2009

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 Morgwn Trolinger (Vice-Chairman)



Councillor Susan Bray



Councillor Roger Dennison



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 which is undertaken by Council Business Committee each year to ensure the Council provides the proper guidance and relevant support to all Members.

Each year information is gathered from the one to one interviews and annual reviews that have take place along with feedback from the variety of training events that take place. The Strategy is then reviewed by the Council Business Committee to reflect the information gathered over the previous 12 months alongside the issues that had emerged from the Corporate Priorities set by full Council for 2009/10 as follows:

- Support out local economy
- Clean and green places
- Safe and healthy communities
- Support our local communities

Within those four priorities there are seven objectives:-

Objective 1 Work in partnership to ensure a strategic approach to economic development and regeneration

Objective 2 Maintain the cleanliness of our streets and public spaces.

Objective 3 Develop local responses to Climate Change.

Objective 4 Work in partnership and make our district an even safer place addressing crime and the fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour.

Objective 5 To contribute towards health improvement and reducing health inequalities through both the delivery of our own services and our work with partners.

Objective 6 To improve the standard, availability and affordability of housing in the district to meet local needs.

Objective 7 To work in partnership with others meet the differing needs of communities within our district.

This, therefore is a revised edition of the Elected Member Training and Development Programme for 2009/10 agreed as a result of that review.

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 eight key development priorities (in no particular order):

- ❖ Local Government Finance
- ❖ IT training
- ❖ Decision Making Processes (including County Council functions)
- ❖ Ward and Community Leadership
- ❖ Political Leadership
- ❖ Community Engagement and Community Cohesion
- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Service Briefings

There is a clear message in the objectives contained within the Corporate Plan that the Council needs to work with its partners to address the issues raised and this is taking place through the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP). As much of this work is undertaken by Cabinet Members, Councillors need to understand the process of the LDLSP and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

A programme of development sessions for Members on the Council's Regulatory Committees is also being introduced with the Audit Committee leading the way on this.

The continued use of different approaches to learning and development will continue to be explored and promoted such as shadowing, on-line learning and mentoring.

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 continue over the following year:

- 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 is ongoing as part of this project.

4. Progress

Set out below are a number of achievements and successes which highlight the Council's commitment to Member Development.

- ❖ The Council was awarded the North West Employers Organisation's Charter for Member Development in November 2008.
- ❖ The Council was also awarded the prestigious Municipal Journal Award for Member Development.
- ❖ The most recent Member Development Programme was launched at the Business Council meeting in May 2009. It includes 52 development opportunities for Members. This is a rolling programme which will be added to over the remainder of the year taking into account the priorities contained within this Strategy.
- ❖ Over the past 12 months, 71 development sessions have taken place. This does not include the individual support that has been offered to Members over the year such as one to one IT sessions.
- ❖ Councillors now have the use communal Members' rooms both at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Hall. In these rooms they have the use of several computers, access to the Members Library and information on training and development opportunities.
- ❖ The use of innovative development methods has been explored. Several Councillors took part in shadowing opportunities over the year and 'taster' sessions continue to give Councillors an insight into the diverse communities within the district.
- ❖ IT Workshops continue to take place before Council meetings at Morecambe Town Hall and personalised one to one IT training has been offered including using email, internet, web pages and Microsoft Word.
- ❖ E-newsletters continue as a source of valuable information for Councillors.
- ❖ Members continue to take up places on the IDEA Leadership Academy.
- ❖ All Council Business Committee meetings are now paperless.
- ❖ 80% Members have attended some type of training or development session over the last 12 months.
- ❖ A dedicated area on the intranet has been created for Members containing useful documents, links and ward information.
- ❖ A total of £9,800 is available in 2009/10 to support Member Development activity.
- ❖ The roll out of new laptops for Members took place in 2009. Teething difficulties were overcome and now most Councillors have a new faster machine for Council work.

Members' comments

*All relevant, good pace, no powerpoint
– how different. Learnt directly and
improved - Superb*

Cllr Rob Smith

*I now feel more confident at speaking
in public and making speeches.*

Cllr June Ashworth

*I enjoyed the training immensely
– the time went by so quickly*

Cllr Evelyn Archer

Communicating with Clarity

*Good overview of
functions – liked
interactive nature*
Cllr Roger Plumb

*I found all of the course very
interesting. I don't think anything
could have been improved.*
Cllr Robert Redfern

Role of Parish and Town Councils

*Very pleased with
session*
Cllr Ron Sands

*All the information gained
was useful*
Cllr Roger Sherlock

Decision Making Process

*Excellent way to get further
use of information on
intranet – good explanation
of decision making.*
Cllr Keith Sowden

*It's informative and will help explain the
process to constituents when asked –
especially with regards to length of
process.*
Cllr Roger Plumb

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. For 2009/10 the budget is set as £9,800.

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:

Julie Rutlidge
Assistant Ceremonial and Members' Officer
Tel: (01524) 582170
Email: jrutlidge@lancaster.gov.uk

Jenny Kay
Democratic Support Officer
Tel: (01524) 582065
Email: jkay@lancaster.gov.uk

Suzie Smith (November onwards)
Senior Democratic Support Officer
Tel: (01524) 582074
Email: smsmith@lancaster.gov.uk

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