



Draft Member Development and Support Strategy

Foreword

Cherwell District Council is committed to supporting and developing its Councillors. This strategy aims to promote support, training and development opportunities for members.

There are many different ways to learn and develop and not all learning involves sitting in a room watching power point presentations. The Council offers a variety of different learning and development opportunities, in order to ensure these meet your needs as a Councillor it is essential that you take part in a member support interview to influence the member development programme for the year ahead.

It is important that all members are engaged with the learning and development process to ensure that the Council can

meet its strategic priorities and continue to deliver improved services to people who live and work in the District.

Whilst you may have existing skills and knowledge which are transferable to your role as a Councillor there are many different aspects to the role where we all need additional support and guidance to obtain other relevant skills and knowledge. This strategy does not ignore the knowledge and skills of experienced Councillors but provides opportunities for them to support and participate in the development of their colleagues.

We would encourage all Members, even those with years of experience, to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Council.



Councillor Barry Wood
Leader of the Council



Councillor Debbie Pickford
Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services and Member Development



Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

Cherwell Member Development and Support Strategy

Cherwell District Council is committed to a policy of Member Development and Training. Elected Members require an understanding of the on-going and emerging issues facing the community as well as the knowledge and skills to ensure informed decision making.

The Development Programme for Elected Members will provide a range of different opportunities for attendance at a range of informal and formal learning events. These will include conferences, seminars, training courses, briefings, workshops and forums.

The Council will seek to develop new alternatives to traditional training events including: online courses; question and answer briefings and at-home learning.

The purpose of the Member Development Programme is to ensure elected Members' are able to fulfil their role as a representative for their Ward, along with any other appointments that they have within the Council, and to enable Members to feel confident in understanding the issues facing local Government in general.

Cherwell District Council will provide Member support to Elected Representatives to assist

them in these activities and roles.

Legal and Democratic Services will be the lead Council service in the co-ordination and delivery of Member Support and Development, supported by the expertise of Human Resources. The Lead Councillor for Member Development and Support will be the Executive Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development and Improvement.

Aims & Objectives of the Member Development and Support Strategy

The Council's key strategic priorities are:

- A Cleaner, Greener Cherwell District
- A District of Opportunity
- A Safe and Health Cherwell District
- Cherwell An Accessible Value or Money Council

The key aims and objectives of the Member Development and Support Strategy are to:

- support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities
- establish continuous Member Development as a key component to the success of the organisation.
- confirm the practice that the Council will support Members in their role through the provision of certain resources.
- identify individual and common learning and development requirements and ensure that

the Members' training programme consistently addresses Members' requirements

- provide Members with the appropriate opportunities to access events and activities that are appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. Recognising the importance of their roles within the Council, within their ward and when serving on Outside Bodies.
- increase Member attendance at training events through Member ownership of the annual member development programme

Member Development Programme

The Member Development Programme is the principle delivery mechanism for the Member Development and Support Strategy. Ensuring the successful delivery of the strategy is a shared responsibility between the Council, Members and Officers.

The responsibilities of the Council

The Council will meet its responsibilities by making the following available to all Members:

Induction Programme

All newly Elected Members will be offered a comprehensive Induction Programme which will cover the basic areas of knowledge necessary to newly elected Councillors. All newly elected members will receive a welcome telephone call in the week following their election from

Legal and Democratic Services to answer any initial questions, gather initial contact details and arrange for them to meet the Chief Executive. Newly Elected members will be provided with a comprehensive induction pack.

The Induction Programme will provide information on

- the functions of the Council
- the legal requirements, roles and responsibilities of Members
- the Codes of Conduct, Protocols, and requirements in respect of ethics and probity
- an overview of the services the Council delivers

Induction sessions will also be open to re-elected members whose valuable experience and knowledge can assist newly elected Members.

Development Opportunities and Attendance at events

A programme of events will be published and distributed to all members and updated on a regular basis this will be based on

- issues identified in Members' Personal support Plans
- common needs of the Council and its Councillors
- corporate priorities

There will be a number of briefings, seminars and workshops that will provide information in respect of local and national issues. There will also be a range of other events that Members may wish to nominate themselves to attend, or be invited to attend by officers/ service areas: these events might include external conferences. Opportunities will be developed to provide joint officer and member training to achieve value for money, where possible.

Joint Working

The Council will develop arrangements in partnership with other authorities and parish and town councils to deliver joint member development sessions. The Council has already established links with Banbury and Bicester Town Councils and offers their members places on Cherwell member training sessions, for a small charge to defray costs.

Attendance Records

The Council will maintain a member training attendance database. Records of attendance will be circulated to each political group on a monthly basis.

The responsibilities of Members

Councillors will fulfil their responsibilities by undertaking the following:

Induction Programme

All newly elected Members will attend the Induction Programme that the Council provides.

Attending required training or development events

Members are required by the Constitution and Law to undertake training or attend briefings in respect of certain roles. Attendance at these training or development events is essential before Members can serve on certain Committees, such as Licensing, Planning and Standards.

Democratic Services will provide Group Leaders and Secretaries and Corporate Management Team with a member attendance at development events report.

Personal Plans

Members will be encouraged to attend an annual member support interview to discuss their needs and to complete a Personal Plan in order to identify their support and development needs. This is to ensure that support and training events properly meet the identified development needs and / or the role of the Member, and the broader requirements of the Council. Involvement in personal plans by Members is key to increased attendance at events. The Council can only provide a member development programme which meets the needs of Councillors and which is well attended if Members communicate their needs through the support interviews.

If a member requests to attend an external training event or conference they will be invited to attend a member support interview to ascertain their training needs if they have not already done so.

External Training Events and Conferences

The Council actively promotes the dissemination of learning which helps to provide greater value from event attendance.

When Members attend external training events, they will be encouraged to provide a short written report as a minimum, along with any handouts (etc) to the Legal and Democratic Services, which can then be distributed to relevant Members where appropriate. Members may be asked to provide a briefing session to other Members in order to pass on any information / learning that has been acquired where appropriate.

Evaluation of Training Events

Members will be expected to complete a training evaluation form when they have attended training in order to ensure the member development programme meets the needs they have identified in their support interviews.

Member Support

Member support is a responsibility of the Council and is an important part of the Member Development and Support Strategy. It is essential that support is available to Elected Members to assist them in their role as it provides the resources necessary to perform efficiently and effectively.

The Council will provide the following to Elected Members:

- IT equipment – as set out in the IT Member Specification
- Individual member websites through the Committee Management System

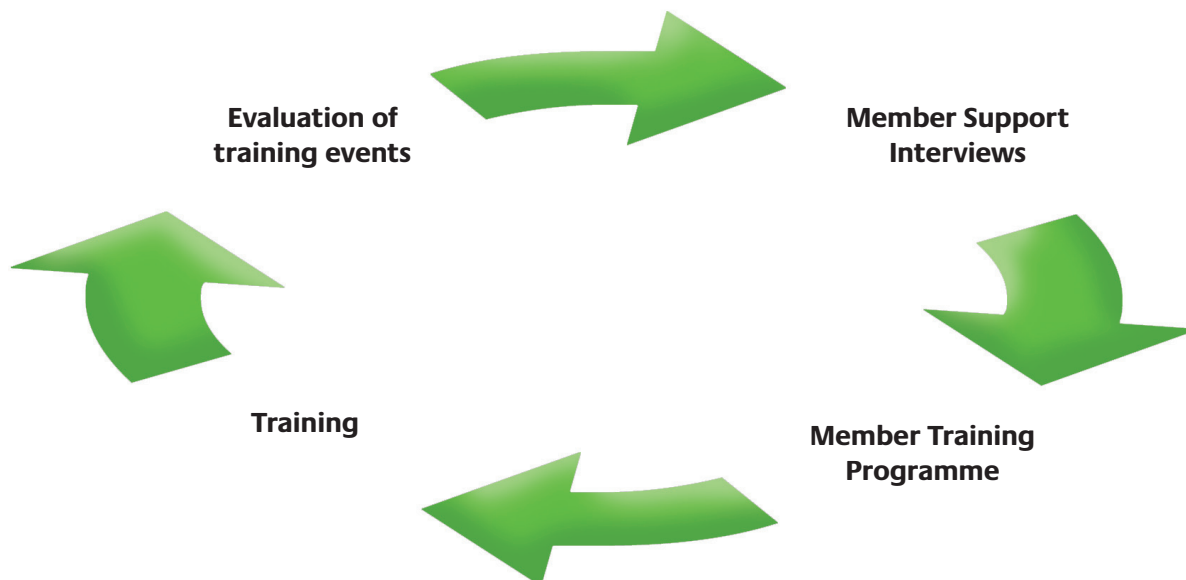
- Weekly electronic Member Information Bulletin
- Member Information pages on the intranet
- Annual Member survey
- A support Service within Legal and Democratic Services
- Support to representatives on outside bodies and partnerships
- Member Room and Resources

There will also be special responsibility support available to Portfolio Holders and

Committee Chairman through the administrative support function of the relevant service area. Through the special responsibility support Portfolio Holders and Chairman can access specialist knowledge and research assistance.

Member Development Diagram

(the diagram illustrates the relationship between support interviews, training programme, and evaluation of training. This will be an annual cycle.)



How to contact us

This document is available from the Council's website at www.cherwell.gov.uk as a PDF, or by contacting Democratic Services on 01295 221591, by emailing democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or by writing to:

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The information in this document can be made available in other languages, large print braille, audio tape or electronic format on request. Please contact 01295 227001

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać. 01295 227001

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如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。01295 227001

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