Members' Development Framework

1. Strategic aims of the framework

1.1   This development framework aims to:

- promote the purpose and importance of councillor development and ensure buy-in from all councillors and officers.
- promote a positive and inclusive culture of learning, development and continual improvement.
- ensure the needs of councillors including individual learning styles are understood and catered for.
- provide a high quality and engaging programme of learning and development to ensure councillors can be effective and confident in their role.
- strengthen councillor-officer relationships.
- enhance democracy, participation and councillor diversity.
- celebrate achievements and impact.

2. Identifying training needs

2.1.   The key roles and functions of councillors can be summarised as:

- policymaker
- community leader and networker
- community leader/representative/advocate
- ward representative
- Council representative
- decision-maker
- scrutiniser
- regulator
- spokesperson

2.2.   Additional responsibilities of Portfolio Holders include:

- promoting the objectives and values of the Council
- ensuring the development of new policies
- providing guidance on budget and political priorities
- contributing to effective decision-making
- promoting reports and answering questions from other elected members and the public

3. How learning and development opportunities will be provided

3.1.   The learning and development programme will aim to support councillors through the various stages of their political careers from induction through comprehensive ongoing learning and development.

3.2. Councillors will be required to attend learning events where these relate to the regulatory functions of the Council, such as planning and licensing matters (see section 6). They will be encouraged to attend other learning and development events to enhance their skills and knowledge.

3.3. All Councillors will be expected to attend mandatory development events on key topics as identified in the Member Development Programme. These may include sessions on:

- Equalities and Diversity
- Safeguarding
- Mandatory Committee specific each municipal year – Planning, Accounts, Audit & Risk
- Committee specific each municipal year – Scrutiny, Personnel
- Local government finance
- Code of Conduct (mandatory within 6 months of election/re-election)
- Community engagement
- Information Governance
- Risk management

3.4. Additional learning events will be provided specifically for Portfolio Holders, Chairs and other councillors as appropriate. These may include:

- Chairing meetings
- Dealing with the Media

3.5. Councillors will be informed of forthcoming learning and development events by member updates.

3.6. Where practicable and appropriate, learning events will be recorded and evaluation feedback will be obtained.

3.7. Individual requests made by Councillors for specific development activities will be accommodated wherever possible, subject to the relevance to their role and utilising the training budget to maximise training opportunities for all councillors.

3.8. Requests for training should be made to the Democratic and Elections team. Approval of external training will be made by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant Group Leader subject to budget. A copy of the course notes and feedback should be provided to the Monitoring Officer after attending external training.

4. **Induction**

4.1. Induction will be provided for all new Councillors soon after the scheduled elections and attendance is mandatory for all new Councillors.

In the event of by-elections, an induction session will be arranged between the Monitoring Officer and newly elected Councillor(s) at a mutually convenient time.

4.2.   Induction will provide:

- the opportunity to meet with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and key officers who will explain their roles within the Council
- an introduction to the Council's key strategies and priorities
- an outline of the policies and procedures of the Council
- information on the support and facilities available for Councillors
- an introduction to the Members' Code of Conduct and protocols

5. IT and mod.gov

5.1.   Electronic communication, specifically through e-mail and the Council's website, is an essential medium for the efficient and effective delivery of services by the Council. Consequently, there is an increasing expectation that councillors will be proficient and confident in its use.

5.2.   All councillors will be provided with laptops for use when conducting council business. Mobile phones are available on request for council business.

5.3.   Dependent on their level of proficiency, councillors are expected to take advantage of the range of IT skills development courses provided by the Council.

5.4.   The IT team will provide bespoke IT training to Councillors in small groups on request.

5.5.   Specific training will be given to all councillors on using the mod.gov app, in order to limit the need for printed paper agendas and reports.

6. Regulatory and specialist learning

6.1.   Members of those Committees with a regulatory role, such as Planning, Licensing and Standards, will be required to attend specialist training in these disciplines every municipal year.

6.2.   It is essential and mandatory that Councillors participate in these learning events in order to contribute to effective and lawful decision-making in these areas.

7. Councillor Briefings

7.1.   The Council will continue to provide a comprehensive programme of briefings for all councillors covering a broad range of topics from policy issues through to specific service matters. These form an integral part of the Councillor development programme and all councillors will be expected to attend.

7.2.   Priority will be given to subjects directly relevant to the Council's strategic themes.

7.3.   Briefings will generally be undertaken by Council officers but partners and representatives of other organisations may be invited to address councillors from time to time.

8. External conferences and learning and development events

8.1.   Attendance will normally be restricted to councillors with special responsibilities, requiring other specialist knowledge or skills which it is not cost-effective to provide in-house.

8.2.   Whenever the opportunity presents itself, joint development events will be held with neighbouring authorities.

9. Resources

9.1   Each year the Council sets a budget and member training is included within that budget.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

10.1.   The Councillor Development Framework will be reviewed and the outcome of learning and development events will be used to inform the future learning and development programme and the format and content of future events.