



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Member Development Policy

Date: May 2018

Review: May 2021

Policy statement

The expectations on elected members are higher than they have ever been. Our communities want their authority to deliver high quality services, to be run and managed well and respond quickly and meaningfully to changing demands. This means that elected members have to be effective in their roles – including governance, local representation, having detailed knowledge of relevant law and policy and be knowledgeable about the services we provide.

To ensure that elected members are successful in their roles, training and development cannot be side-lined or treated as an optional activity. Every elected member has a responsibility to ensure their skills are regularly updated and the Council needs to effectively support them in achieving this.

1. Key principles

- That a culture of learning is encouraged that regards continuous member development as vital to the Council's success
- There will be a range of learning and development opportunities available to all members irrespective of their political group or independent status
- That member development supports and enhances the Council's vision, Council Plan and underpin our values
- That there is a consistency of approach to member development
- Members have ownership of the development programme via the member development group

2. Policy implementation

2.1 The policy will be implemented:

- By the member development group with support via the Democratic and Scrutiny Team
- With the assistance of group leaders who will actively encourage their members to participate in development activities and give feedback on learning and development
- By monitoring on a regular basis to ensure take up and effectiveness of development activity



3.0 Identification of member development needs

3.1 There are a number of ways in which member development needs can be identified including:

- Member induction programme – this is a comprehensive programme delivered for all new elected members and those returning into office following Borough Council elections and individually after by-elections
- Committee membership – certain committees particularly regulatory committees have additional mandatory development requirements identified to enable members to engage fully and ensure the quality of decision making is maintained
- Other new mandatory or refresher training – In addition to mandatory training for committees there may also be other mandatory training requirements identified e.g. data protection, ethical standards, social media and safeguarding etc. that enable members to effectively carry out their roles and duties
- Overview and Scrutiny – the development of the annual scrutiny work programme and associated project groups often highlights the need for further learning and development including briefings on specific topics. Where possible learning and development opportunities will be made available to all elected members
- Emerging issues identified by either the political or officer leadership – these may lead to mandatory or optional e-learning and/or briefings
- Via the political group structures – fed in via their representatives on the member development group
- By individual members accessing the Council's e-learning platform (aspire learning) and identifying core skills courses for completion
- By individual members making an application to be considered by their group leader, Assistant Director for Policy and Communications (Senior Democratic Services Officer as Deputy) and the learning and development team (Human Resources)

3.2 This information will help to build up the rolling member development programme overseen by the member development group. The member development group terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 Methods of delivery

- Regular member bulletin highlighting member resources available via the Council, Local Government Association, East Midlands Council's, Centre for Public Scrutiny and other key organisations supporting the sector
- E-learning via aspire learning
- Internal development and training courses
- Development and training courses run in partnership with other authorities and/or partner organisations
- External courses and events promoted by organisations supporting the sector e.g. Local Government Association

5.0 Application for funding from the member development budget and/or a members expenses contribution

- 5.1 We are able to source the majority of member development opportunities at no or very low cost but we do have a small annual budget available for specialist training opportunities to respond to specific needs e.g. media training for cabinet members. The majority of funding from this budget is pre-allocated for the annual member development plan but we retain some flexibility to respond to requests from individual members to respond to specific needs. We also need to carefully consider requests for training where you wish to claim members expenses for example for a hotel stay or train tickets even if the training itself is free.
- 5.2 There is a short application form to help us consider individual requests. The form is attached at Appendix 2. All requests are to be e-mailed to Emma Hunt, Member and Civic Support Officer. Applications will be considered by the relevant group lead, Assistant Director Policy and Communications (or Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer as deputy) and the learning and development team (Human resources). Please allow at least five working days for consideration.

6.0 Communications

- 6.1 Successful communication is an important part of member development. There will be a bi-monthly newsletter for members which highlights resources available to members and forthcoming learning and development opportunities. The newsletter may also be used to share learning from members attending external courses or events.

6.2 Members are sent calendar appointments and reminders about future events and activities. Group leaders and representatives of the member development group are also asked to encourage members to access opportunities and identify further needs.

7.0 Non-compliance with mandatory training requirements

7.1 Where training requirements have been identified as mandatory for particular committees', failure to comply with training requirements over a reasonable time period will result in the temporary suspension of the member from the particular committee duties until the relevant training is completed. This decision will be taken by the Assistant Director for Policy and Communications in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and relevant group lead.

8.0 Monitoring and evaluation

8.1 The member development group is a forum for discussion, planning and evaluation. After every learning and development opportunity a feedback form is available for members to tell us about their experience with the training, what worked well and what could be improved. A summary of this information will be discussed at the next member development group.

8.2 The member development group will also receive a summary of the requests made and approved for individual learning and development courses. They may ask the member attending to write a short piece for the member newsletter to help share the learning.

9.0 Resources and support

9.1 This policy will be delivered by the member development group with officer support from the democratic and scrutiny team within the policy and communications service. Advice and support will also be available from the human resources service learning and development team. A dedicated budget is available for member learning and development and access to members expenses where appropriate. The Council's e-learning platform aspire learning is also available free of charge to members and offers a wide variety of courses including governance, equalities, health and safety and managing people.

Member development working group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To provide strategic oversight of the council's member development arrangements and maintain progress on the member development improvement plan to ensure learning and development is effective in building elected member capacity.

Objectives

- 1) To provide oversight and challenge to the development and delivery of the member development strategy and rolling member development plan.
- 2) To support and influence the development of member induction/refresher programmes.
- 3) To monitor the member development budget and consider applications for spend.
- 4) To support group leaders in identifying member learning and development needs and promoting uptake of learning and development opportunities.
- 5) To identify and consider best practice, information and development opportunities to support future member development activity.
- 6) To consider evaluation and feedback from member development activity and develop improvement suggestions to further enhance member development activity.
- 7) To consider and offer insight into member development related issues emerging from corporate activity for example investors in people, employee surveys, customer satisfaction surveys and peer challenge.

Meeting arrangements

Meetings will take place every two months. There may be the need for e-mail discussions in between meetings for more urgent items such as member development training approval. The Member and Civic Support Officer will co-ordinate the meetings. The agenda and papers will be distributed one week before the meeting.

Membership

- Cabinet member for Governance (Chair)



- Overview and Scrutiny Chairs
- One elected member from the leading group
- One elected member from the minority group
- Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
- Member and Civic Support Officer
- Representative from Human Resources

In addition, the group may co-opt additional elected members, officers and partner agencies where appropriate to particular project work or emerging issues.



Application for funding from the member development budget and/or a members expenses contribution

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Please answer the questions below and e-mail your request to Emma Hunt, Member and Civic Support Officer. Applications will be considered by the relevant group lead, Assistant Director Policy and Communications (or Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer as deputy) and learning and development.

Q1 Your name:

Q2 Name of the course/activity:

Q3 Name of the training provider:

Q4 The date and location of the course/activity:

Q5 Overview of the training activity including aims and objectives:



Q6 How will you benefit from the training?

Q7 What will the wider benefit to the Council be and how will you share the learning with other elected members e.g. article for the member development newsletter, talk at member development group/ groups sessions etc.?

Q8 Funding

Amount of funding requested from the member development budget

Funding secured from another source - Amount

Funder:

Q9 Estimate on additional costs e.g. hotel, travel expenses etc. to be claimed via member expenses:

Post application notes:

Summary of comments received:

Application approved

Reason:

Application refused