

Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	30 June 2021
Heading:	MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT		
Portfolio Holder:			
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The current Member Development Strategy was approved at Council on the 16 February 2017. The Strategy sets out a commitment from Ashfield District Council regarding training and development for Elected Members.

Its aim was to provide guidance on how members will be supported and provided with learning and development opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge necessary to undertake their roles as community leaders and representatives of the Council.

Following its approval in 2017, there has been a number of changes in the following years including new Elected Members following the District Elections in May 2019 and developments in online training and digital interaction following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current strategy is attached as Appendix A. This reports objective is to consider how the strategy can be updated to ensure it is fit for purpose. This includes, self assessments, monitoring, Member development, types and frequency of training and those areas of mandatory training.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Committee are asked to;

- Consider the key skills and knowledge required to assist Members with their role.
- Discuss improvements to Member training, both for Committees and Member development as a whole, including those mandatory elements.
- Review the current Member Development Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

As a Council, we recognise that the learning and development of Members is crucial to our success and will bring wider benefits to both the organisation and our citizens

Alternative Options Considered

The current Member Development Strategy is for discussion only. It is recognised that in the proceeding four years there has been significant change and challenges for Elected Members and these should be considered in any review of the current Strategy. Any alternative options or actions suggested will be considered as part of the wider development of a Strategy before approval.

Detailed Information

Local Authorities have an obligation to ensure that they support elected Members to provide and improve corporate governance, local democracy and local services. The Council recognises that members have a pivotal role in taking forward the modernisation agenda and that its success will depend on elected members having the capacity to provide the best possible service to their residents.

All Elected Members whether newly elected or experienced will benefit from the opportunities available for specific learning and continuing development in order to fully appreciate and contribute to the dynamic service delivery agenda and to update and refresh the skills and knowledge required.

All Elected Members need to understand the scope and scale of the role in order to be able to identify the personal development needs that will enable them to fulfil the ever increasing individual and political demands.

The Different Roles of Members

There is considerable overlap in the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of all Elected Members in their different roles. It is therefore helpful to identify at this stage the different roles that elected members have and for which they need to be equipped.

- **As Members of Council**

Providing collective co-ordinated strategic direction to the policy framework of the Council including budgeting to meet strategic priorities.

- **As Cabinet Members**

Having a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of particular portfolios they hold as Executive Members and providing strategic direction within that portfolio. Providing collective leadership and direction as Cabinet members and ensuring a coordinated approach to policy and strategy development across the Council and with our partners.

- **As Overview and Scrutiny Members**

Providing constructive challenge as members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the strategic and policy development of the Council and its service performance to support the Council in delivering its strategic objectives.

- **As Members of Regulatory Committees**

Carrying out the regulatory functions of the Council in a fair and proper manner, consistent with legal obligations.

- **As Opposition Members**

Providing constructive challenge as opposition Members to the strategic and policy development of the Council and its service performance to support the Council in delivering its strategic objectives.

Improving identification and assessment of training requirements will provide additional governance to the democratic process and ensure that Elected Members gain the necessary skills to carry out their role effectively.

Considerations for Revising the Strategy

To ensure that the revised Member Training and Development Strategy is fit for purpose Members should consider the following areas;

- Purpose and aims
- Elected Member skills and personal development
- Identifying training needs
- Monitoring Elected Member training
- Delivery Methods
- Ethical Standards
- Equalities and Inclusion
- Mandatory training
- Inductions

Following feedback from Elected Members a revised draft Strategy will be presented to the Committee on the 29 September 2021 for consideration.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

This Corporate Plan 2019 -2023 identify six clear priority areas of focus for the Council. Ensuring Elected Members representing Ashfield have the knowledge, skills and training is essential to the delivery of its key projects.

Legal:

Mandatory training is identified in the Council's Constitution, these are elements of training that have been deemed compulsory for participating in regulatory Committees or essential to carrying out the role of a Councillor.

Finance:

The cost of training identified is to be met from the existing Training & Development budget for members of £10,000.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The existing Member training budget of £10,000 per annum, is to covers all training expenses for 35 Elected Members.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Members making decisions without adequate training poses a potential risk to services and projects delivered by the Council. Furthermore, Members interact with the community on a daily basis on issues of community concern.	Development of an inclusive, operational Member Training and Development Strategy that also details monitoring and evaluation of training.

Human Resources:

Ongoing work will be undertaken with Human Resources regarding the development of a Strategy to ensure that it meets the needs of all Members in carrying out their role.

Environmental/Sustainability

No implications identified

Equalities:

Member learning and development activities are open for all Members to attend and it is intended that all such activities should be equally accessible and meet to the Council's equal opportunities policy and practice.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency

None

Reason(s) for Exemption

None

Background Papers

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