Member Development Strategy

Introduction

In October 2006, the Council were awarded with the North West Charter Award for Elected Member Development, which has a lifespan of three years, after which time, the Council will be re-assessed to ensure continuous improvement and improved effectiveness of the Member development process.

This strategy has been produced in consultation with Councillors to ensure that member development is relevant and appropriate to their needs. This is a flexible, working document which will evolve as required to meet the needs of the Authority.

Training and development is available to, and its take-up will be encouraged for, all Councillors irrespective of seniority, length of service or political affiliation and will be provided in accordance with the council's commitment to equal opportunities.

Links to Council Plan

The Council Plan for 2012-13 includes the following goal:

"We will deliver excellent and value for money services"

And the following objective:

"To maintain a skilled, adaptable and productive workforce led by effective leading members and a strong and high performing management team."

The Mission Statement

Copeland Borough Council is committed to the development of its Councillors as a key to success in delivering high quality and valued services to the public.

The Council believes that Councillors play a pivotal role in delivering the improvement and innovations to which the Council is committed in its ~~5 year~~ Corporate Plan. As innovation and change expose both elected Members and

officers to new experiences and challenges, new skills and knowledge are needed to ensure Councillors continue to have the capacity to provide high quality services and leadership in their local communities

The Council is committed to the continued recruitment and retention of high quality individuals from all sectors of the community into local government as Councillors and believes that a robust and eclectic development programme will be a cornerstone to successful leadership succession planning.

Aims

The Member Development Strategy has the following underlying aims:

- To encourage Councillors in their own development & learning and to take full advantage of learning and development opportunities available to them

- To raise the profile of Copeland by ensuring each Councillor has access to training which will improve the quality of their role and the service they give to the public

- To contribute to the Council's corporate aims through learning and development

- To enable the sharing of good practice.

- *To ensure Members have a full understanding of their different roles, for example: decision-making role; scrutiny role; community leadership role; representative role on outside organisations*

- To ensure that all newly elected Members are properly inducted into the Council and their role.

We will ensure that:

- Development needs will be identified at least annually by a combination of organisational, statutory and individual requirements.

- All Councillors will be encouraged to develop their roles using as a guide those in the agreed Elected Member Role Descriptions.

- All Councillors will be made aware of development opportunities available through all means possible, including email and a ~~fortnightly~~ *periodic* newsletter.

- All new Councillors will be allocated with a Councillor and an Officer Mentor ~~from the Democratic Services Section~~ to assist in providing information on resources.

- All Councillors will be *required* ~~encouraged to take up the opportunity~~ to complete *annual* Personal Development Plans to assist them in identifying their learning and development needs.

- All Councillors are equipped with the necessary skills to make maximum use of

~~e-government and e-learning.~~ *all sources of learning, including internet and social media sources.*

- The process of learning and development will be conducted in accordance with *equality requirements.* ~~the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy~~.

- An assessment will be provided upon request, of how we can assist those with special needs, family or work commitments to carry out their role as a Councillor.

- Development activities will be assessed to ensure value for money in accordance with the Council's financial Standing Orders and events will be reviewed to ensure quality and effectiveness.

- We will create the right environment where learning is encouraged and supported.

- In order to develop links with all parts of the Community, training and development will be carried out where possible on a partnership basis with the County, other District Councils, Town & Parish Councils and the ~~Cumbria Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (CIEP).~~ *NWIEP*

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Individual Councillor** – whilst the Council will offer practical support and encouragement and where possible and appropriate, resources for training and development, the Council expects *and requires* each individual Councillor to take a personal responsibility for their own learning and self-development.

The **Member Development Panel** – will oversee all Councillor training and development on behalf of the Council and will agree all training and development strategies and programmes for Councillors, including agreeing the Annual Member Development Programme and events not included in the programme, and encouraging & promoting a culture of learning and continuous improvement.

The **Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team** - Will support Councillors, devise and deliver a comprehensive Development Programme, advise and assist the Member Development Panel in carrying out their role, increase awareness of development opportunities and provide all logistic and administrative assistance to Councillors in connection with learning and development.

*The **Senior Leadership Team** – will lead, encourage and facilitate member development and will participate in delivery of development and mentoring where appropriate.*

How will we measure our Effectiveness in implementing the Strategy?

- Councillors feeling more confident in their role (assessed as a percentage increase by the annual questionnaire)

- Councillors stating that their knowledge of modernisation, Scrutiny, ethics has increased (assessed as a percentage increase by the annual questionnaire)

- An increase in the number of Councillors undertaking development activities

Induction

All Councillors will be encouraged to undertake an Induction Programme in the first few months following election covering the basic areas of knowledge necessary and to participate within a supportive environment. The Induction Programme will be delivered in whole or in part as e-learning.

Induction sessions will be held throughout the first three months and these sessions will be shared between this Council and Allerdale Borough Council and will be open to existing Councillors.

All newly elected councillors will be given contact details of their Member and Officer Mentor within one week of their election.

Each new Councillor will receive an Induction Pack containing helpful and practical information to assist them in the first few months in their new role.

Refresher courses will be held annually in respect of each of the Council's committees. The courses will take place at the first meeting of each Committee following the annual meeting and will outline the terms of reference and provide any information needed to participate fully in the work of the Committee.

Integrated Training

Where *appropriate and* possible, staff and Councillors will be trained together, this reflects the culture of the Council and leads to better mutual understanding and co-operation. Development opportunities will also be offered where possible, to Allerdale Borough Councillors and Town & Parish Councils. *partner organisations*

Information Services

An abundance of useful information is made available for Members to assist them in their role. Information can be obtained from the Members Room, The Council's Intranet site, the Council's Website and the newsletters 'Member Information Bulletin', 'Members Development Newsletter' and 'Standards Committee Newsletter'.

Learning Styles

It is recognised that people have different preferences for the way in which they learn new skills. There are a wide range of methods for learning including:

- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Observation
- ❖ Presentations

- ❖ Quiet Reading
- ❖ Action Learning
- ❖ Internet Research
- ❖ Councillor Mentoring
- ❖ Local College courses
- ❖ Information Technology
- ❖ CD ROMs /DVD's and Videos
- ❖ Visits to other Local Authorities
- ❖ Local, Regional and National Conferences
- ❖ Corporate Training and Development Courses

Training Needs Analysis

A training needs analysis will be undertaken *annually* ~~at least every 2 years~~ by identifying individual training needs *arising from PDP's* ~~using a trained facilitator~~. The results of this analysis will indicate the learning and development priorities for forthcoming years.

~~IT Training~~

~~Today more and more information is transmitted and stored electronically than ever before; Members without IT skills may find themselves at a significant disadvantage. Members are encouraged to use IT and take up opportunities for developing their IT skills.~~

Evaluation & Monitoring of the Strategy

It is vital that Members are well equipped to undertake their work and be effective as local representatives.

The Member Development Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Member Development Panel, and recommended to Full Council for agreement.

Evaluation & Monitoring of What Members Learn

In order to get the best out of development opportunities we need to evaluate the impact of any organised event and ensure that any learning has been put into practice.

Where events are organised by the Council, Members will be requested to complete a feedback form. These forms should be completed as honestly as possible to help ensure that future Members are receiving high quality training with positive outcomes. The Member Development Panel will review the attendance and feedback from events on a quarterly basis.

~~September 2008~~ *June 2012*