

Member Training & Development Strategy

2010-2013

Developed by the Member Development Working Group and agreed

[dates to be inserted]

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Quotes from each Party Leader, the Executive Member for Performance and Total Place and the Chairman of MDWG on the importance of developing members

The Council's current Corporate Plan 2009-2012 outlines the direction for Swale Borough Council and helps to identify the importance of training and developing elected members to achieve its vision, aims and priorities, which include:

- The **Overarching Vision for Swale** is to transform Swale's economic, social and environmental prospects, so that it is one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work, learn and invest.
- The **Council's Mission** is to deliver, directly and in partnership with others, a variety of services to meet and champion the needs of the local community.
- The **Council's Aim** is to be a performance led organisation that delivers excellent public services, good value for money and effective community leadership.
- The **Council Priorities** are:
 1. Regenerating Swale
 2. Creating A Cleaner and Greener Swale
 3. Promoting A Safer and Stronger Community
 4. Becoming A High Performing Organisation

Swale Borough Council is no different to other Councils in having to manage constant change and operating in a highly challenging environment, with an emphasis on reducing costs whilst maintaining and improving service delivery where possible.

The aim of the Member Training and Development Strategy (2010 – 2013) is to show the importance of training and development of Swale Borough Council's 47 members to:

- Understand and be able to implement the Corporate priorities of Swale Borough Council
- Understand the external operating environment to aid effective decision making and scrutiny, which includes value for money, partnership working, Total Place, shared services and commissioning
- Become effective community leaders, meet the requirements of the role descriptions (as outlined in the Constitution and agreed at Full Council in July 2009) and be fully aware of the changing role of the member
- Take responsibility for their own learning and development and meet their own personal development needs as a member
- Help in succession planning – in becoming future chairmen, vice-chairmen, and Executive members
- Induct new members
- Contribute to Swale being a learning organisation and having a culture of learning
- Meet statutory requirements e.g. planning, licensing, equality, health and safety

and to identify roles and responsibilities, ensure equality of opportunity and implement processes and procedures to ensure the best use of resources in identifying and meeting the training and development needs of members. Due to the importance of training and developing members Swale Borough Council is working towards achieving the South East Charter for Elected Member Development (Member Development Charter) to establish best practice in training and developing members.

Although this Strategy is primarily aimed at Swale' Borough Councillors, the Council recognises the role of independent members and aims to identify and met their needs within the training programme.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Members

It is the role and responsibilities of individual members to:

- Be responsible for their personal development and undertake appropriate training and development opportunities
- Participate in all mandatory training
- Evaluate, feedback and share information from any training and development interventions

2.2 Group Leaders

It is the role and responsibility of group leaders to ensure that:

- Member training and development is a regular item on the agendas of group meetings – feedback from the MDWG, identification of training and development needs, feedback and sharing information from training and development sessions
- One-to-one discussions take place on an annual basis between each group leader and each group member – to discuss performance, training and development needs, training and development received and future aspirations and requirements
- Training and development opportunities are communicated to all members
- Full discussion of training and development issues at Full Council and other Council forums

2.3 Executive Members

It is the role and responsibility of Executive Members to ensure that:

- The Council are kept well informed on member training and development initiatives – progress, plans, evaluation, for instance
- There is a budget to meet the identified training and development needs for members
- The training and development process is encouraged, with a particular emphasis for their own portfolio

2.4 Member Development Working Group

The Member Development Working Group (MDWG) was re-established in March 2009 and has met regularly to formalise and establish member development at Swale Borough Council.

2.41 Terms of Reference

These terms of reference were agreed in March 2009. They will be reviewed in 2010 and already it has been identified that there will be an emphasis on continuance and improvement.

- (a) To develop and review an action plan on how the Council will strive to achieve the Member Development Charter and to develop a policy statement on the training and development opportunities available to members so that members are fully aware of the training opportunities available.
- (b) To develop and review a member led Training and Development Programme for members, including an Induction Programme for new members; which will incorporate the member briefings. This should not only look at the subject, but also method of delivery and start time.
- (c) To encourage members to take full advantage of the member development and training opportunities available; each member of the Group to champion member training throughout their respective groups.
- (d) The Group will have a role to play in encouraging members to identify their training needs whether this is by survey etc, or self assessment and feeding back to Democratic Services. This is essential to ensure that the programme is member driven and is geared to meet their needs.
- (e) Identify a protocol for allocating the member Training Budget; how to prioritise needs; and how the training links with the Council's corporate objectives.
- (f) To establish a system to encourage feedback on training and development, to assess the effectiveness of training provided, and to use this feedback in the ongoing review of the training programme.
- (g) That the Member Development Working Group produces an annual report to the Performance Board and Standards Committee and a bi-annual report to Council.

2.5 Officers

The Member Development Working Group is supported by the Corporate Services Director, Mark Radford and Democratic Services, led by the Senior Democratic Officer, Jo Hammond.

It is also the responsibility of other officers, in particular the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to work with the members and in particular the MDWG to identify and meet the training and development needs of the members. This will include liaison with the Council's Training and Development Manager.

3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

There are many ways in which the training and development needs of members are identified and they include:

- Self identification by members
- Through the MDWG
- Mandatory requirements e.g. planning, licensing, equality
- Corporate issues e.g. equality and diversity
- Suggestions from Senior Management Team and Heads of Service via the MDWG
- Members' feedback from training and development sessions
- One-to-one discussions between each member and their group leader
- Using the role descriptions for members, the leader of the Council, Executive members, Group leaders, members of the Policy Overview Committee or Scrutiny Committee and Chairmen
- Through the Scrutiny and Standards Committees

4.0 MEETING THE IDENTIFIED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The identified training and development needs can be met in a wide variety of ways. There needs to be a variety as training and development needs vary from member to member and need to ensure equality of opportunity to take into account members' commitments for instance if a member works during the day or evening, has family or carer responsibilities. (Where possible, training sessions will be offered during the day and evening to enable members to attend.)

4.1 Induction

The induction programme was reviewed in 2010 by the MDWG gaining feedback from new councillors, well established councillors and Heads of Service and referring to other Councils' programmes. The comprehensive programme now includes a handbook (including a map of the civic centre, a phone book, information about the MDWG, guidance notes on completing forms, induction feedback form), welcome meeting with Senior Management Team and Democratic Services, tour of the civic centre, briefings by senior officers, a briefing by a relatively new member, one-to-one meetings with Democratic Services where required and evaluation.

4.2 Member Training and Development Programme

The Member Training and Development Programme is agreed by the Member Development Working Group on an annual basis and reviewed and updated every six months. The Training and Development Programme is based on the training and development needs identified in 3.0 and includes:

- Briefings by senior officers
- Workshops/courses led by external providers
- Member Conference
- Joint training arranged with other local Councils and partners
- Training provided for staff and managers, which are appropriate for members
- Mentoring

4.3 Other training and development opportunities

Other ways in which training and development can be provided include:

- Specialised member programmes provided by organisations e.g. IDeA (Leadership Academy), South East Employers (SEE)
- Courses/briefings/workshops run by external organisations
- Conferences run by external organisations

- Training provided by outside bodies for those members who are associated with that organisation e.g. CVS
- Mentoring
- E-learning packages
- Reading and researching
- Continuous professional development (CPD)

5.0 ACCESSING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Members will be made aware of training and development opportunities through:

- Flyers from Democratic services
- Emails from Democratic services
- Group meetings
- Websites e.g. IDeA www.idea.gov.uk SEE www.seemp.co.uk
- Direct mailing

If members receive details through the newsletters and e-mails from Democratic Services and wish to take up any of these opportunities they should contact Democratic Services direct.

If Members identify other opportunities which they feel they and the Council would benefit from they need to get agreement from their Group Leader and then refer to Democratic Services for booking.

For conferences agreement to attend is through the Group Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive. Due to financial constraints it may not be possible to agree to all these requests.

Expenses will be paid as outlined in the Members' Allowances Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution).

6.0 BUDGET

The budget for Member Training and Development is £8,000 for 2010/2011, which equates to £170 per member. It is the aim that this figure should not be reduced for 2011/12.

7.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

7.1 Members

Members will be provided with feedback forms following each training session and should complete them and return to Democratic Services. These will help to evaluate the benefit of the training to the member and the Council.

7.2 Member Development Working Group

The feedback forms completed by members will be collated and reported to the Member Development Working Group.

7.3 Group Leaders

Group leaders will receive details of attendance/usage of training opportunities to use at the one-to-one discussions with each member

7.4 Scrutiny Committee

It is aimed that member development is part of the annual work plan for the Scrutiny Committee.

7.5 Full Council

There will be a report to Council every six months outlining the member training and development activities, attendance figures, costs and how the outcomes of the training and development activities have contributed towards corporate and individual priorities. The Member Training and Development Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

7.6 Standards Committee

There will be annual report on member training and development to the Standards Committee focussing on attendance and outcomes.

7.7 Member Charter

Once Swale Borough Council has achieved the Member Development Charter it is essential that it maintains best practice. This should be carried out on an annual basis through the MDWG (self assessment) and reported to full Council as part of the annual report. Swale will be re-assessed after three years.

8.0 ACTION PLANS TO SUPPORT THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2010/2013

Action Plans have been developed to deliver the Member Training and Development Strategy 2010/13. The Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and amended if required, with an annual action plan being developed. This will be led by the MDWG, with the action plan being reviewed regularly by the MDWG and reported on an annual basis to full Council - setting out progress to date and actions to take forward.

8.1 Action Plan for 2010/2011

- Develop, organise and evaluate a one day member conference by the end of September 2010
- Develop, organise and evaluate a Training and Development Plan for 2010/2011
- Achieve the Member Charter by the end of October 2010
- All members to have a one-to-one with their Group Leader by the end of March 2011, supported by guidance notes
- Review of the terms of reference of the MDWG by the end of October 2010
- Carry out the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of member training and development as outlined in this strategy by the end of March 2011
- Investigate into the development of an intranet site for members by the end of March 2011

8.2 Action Plan for 2011/2012

- Develop the member conference into an annual event

- Identify further ways to meet the training and development needs of members through partnership working and opening up further opportunities for members to attend officer training
- Develop, organise and evaluate a Training and Development Plan for 2011/2012
- Review current training and development opportunities for members and review with those members who do not take up training and development opportunities to ensure that their needs are met
- Develop, organise and evaluate a member induction programme
- Carry out a self assessment of the Member Development Charter
- Review the effectiveness of the one-to-ones members have with their Group Leader
- Review the terms of reference of the MDWG
- Carry out the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of member training and development as outlined in the Member Training and Development Strategy
- Review the Member Training and Development Strategy

8.3 Action Plan for 2012/2013

- Develop, organise and evaluate a Training and Development Plan for 2012/2013
- Carry out a self assessment of the Member Development Charter
- Review the terms of reference of the MDWG
- Carry out the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of member training and development as outlined in the Member Training and Development Strategy
- Review the Member Training and Development Strategy