

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to supporting Members in carrying out their different roles (both within the council and outside as community representatives), and recognises the need to provide learning and development opportunities to help councillors undertake those roles.
- 1.2 Carefully planned and well-executed development increases efficiency and effectiveness at individual, role-specific and corporate levels, and results in improved service delivery through the achievement of the council's priorities.
- 1.3 Underpinning this policy is Brighton & Hove's commitment to the principles of the South East Charter for Elected Member Development:-
 - i. Being fully committed to developing Members in order to achieve the council's aims and objectives
 - ii. Adopting a Member-led and strategic approach to Member development
 - iii. Having a Member learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference that development activities will make
 - iv. Seeing that learning and development is effective in building capacity
 - v. Addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship

2. Scope & Purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all elected Members and to co-opted Members, who will be included in role-specific development opportunities.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the council's commitment to providing appropriate development opportunities for all councillors and to describe the consistent and structured approach it will follow in order to do that.

3. Objectives of Member Development

- 3.1 The key requirements of Members' learning and development activities are to:

- ◆ Support individual Members to carry out their existing roles efficiently and effectively
- ◆ Support individual Members in preparing for future roles
- ◆ Enable Members to undertake specific duties and responsibilities
- ◆ Assist with the achievement and implementation of corporate and directorate objectives
- ◆ Keep Members up to date with new legislation and changing policies

4. Key Principles

Equality of access and opportunities

- 4.1 The Council recognises its responsibility to offer equality of access to learning and development activities for all its elected Members. In practice this means ensuring that there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers to Members who want to participate in development opportunities, including those with family and work commitments.
- 4.2 Information about Members' development opportunities shall be published well in advance and appropriately publicised. Members are encouraged to request duplicate events at different timeslots and they are also informed of alternative methods of accessing learning (e.g. through 121 contact with officers, through elearning facilities etc)

Member-led approach

- 4.3 The Council will implement a Member-led approach to learning and development with representatives from all political groups invited to participate in the planning and evaluation of learning and development activities. All Members are encouraged to identify their own development needs, to participate in activities that address those needs and to evaluate the benefit and impact of those activities.

Community Engagement

- 4.4 Member development activities will include activities that promote community engagement and citizenship.

5. Process to manage Member learning and development

- 5.1 The effective management of Member learning should follow a cyclical and structured four-stage approach:

- i. Identifying learning and development needs.
- ii. Planning learning and development activities to best meet needs.

- iii. Maximising access to those development opportunities.
- iv. Evaluating the impact and outcomes of all Member learning

5.2 This approach ensures that learning and development is linked to achieving corporate priorities and delivering real improvements as a result of the investment in learning and development.

Identifying learning and development needs

5.3 To support the Council's strategic priorities, there will be a process for identifying learning and development needs at all levels:

- ◆ Individual
- ◆ Role-specific
- ◆ Political groups
- ◆ Corporate

5.4 For identifying learning and development needs at an individual level:

- ◆ All elected Members will be asked to complete a learning needs analysis questionnaire at least annually in order to identify their learning and support needs for the year ahead.
- ◆ Newly elected Members will have an opportunity to discuss learning and development as part of their induction.
- ◆ All elected Members will be offered the opportunity to discuss their learning and development needs on a one to one basis. Personal development plans will be created for any Member who takes up that opportunity.

5.4 Identification of learning and development needs at a role specific level will be achieved by those in those roles. Materials that could be useful in that process are made available to all members, e.g. the Improvement and Development Agency's Political skills frameworks and generic role profiles published by the Welsh Local Government Association.

5.6 Identification of learning and development needs at political group level will be achieved through feedback from Member Development Group representatives and/or through feedback from group leaders.

5.7 Identification of learning and development needs at a corporate level will be achieved through discussions with the Management team and the Member Development Working group.

Planning learning and development activities

- 5.8 The Member Development Group will oversee the preparation of an annual Member Development Plan that will record priority areas for learning and development based on the results of the learning needs analyses described above. The plan will also set out the proposed learning methods, timescales and estimated costs involved in addressing identified needs, and the council priorities that learning activities will support.

Delivery of activities

- 5.9 The Member development working group encourages the use of a wide range of methods to meet learning and development needs, and it also encourages joint Member and officer learning where appropriate. The types of learning methods used include:
- ◆ Internal: induction, access to Intranet, Internet and e-learning, Members' briefings, seminars and workshops, 121 discussions with officers
 - ◆ External: peer support/councillor mentoring, focused visits to other authorities or partner organisations, regional and national training courses, seminars and conferences.

Evaluating the impact and outcomes of learning

- 5.9 The council will ensure that investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impacts. Evaluation will take place at the following levels:
- ◆ Immediate review to check that the learning and development activity was satisfactory and met learning objectives – via feedback questionnaires.
 - ◆ Measurement that skills, knowledge and behaviours have been acquired or improved as a result – via comparison of pre and post event questionnaires and via follow up questionnaires that ask members to reflect on the impact learning has had on how they work
 - ◆ Measurement that member development has improved function and/or council performance –via reviews by members and senior officers (overseen by the member development working group)
- 5.10 The council is committed to continuous improvement and will make ongoing adjustments and improvements to learning activities in the light of Member feedback and suggestions.

6. Learning and Development Priorities

6.1 The Member Development Plan that is produced each year will set out that year's priority areas to address.

6.2 The council will always prioritise:-

- ◆ Learning required to support the Council's strategic objectives
- ◆ Skills training in areas set out in the Improvement and Development Agency's Political Skills Framework
- ◆ Development that supports the Council's and Members' obligations under European and National regulations and legislation
- ◆ Equalities and Diversity training to ensure social inclusion
- ◆ Induction training for newly elected members
- ◆ Learning required to promote good relations with the Brighton & Hove community and in particular to promote community engagement and citizenship

7. Resources to support Member development

7.1 The Council allocates a Member development budget each year and additional funding is available from directorate budgets for external conferences that directly support directorate objectives.

7.2 The annual Member Development Plan will list the estimated costs of meeting identified development needs. Costs actually incurred will be reported to Governance committee on an annual basis.

7.3 Expenditure of the Member development budget is monitored by the Member development working group.

7.4 Member entitlement to travel and subsistence for attendance at learning and development events is stated in the Scheme of Allowances.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Individual Members

8.1 All individual members are responsible for identifying their learning and development needs and for seeking opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their potential.

- 8.2 All members are responsible for undertaking immediate and longer term reviews of learning activities and for providing feedback to the Democratic Services Manager regarding the quality and impact of those activities.
- 8.3 All members are encouraged to share learning where appropriate with their peers and/or with officers.

Member development working group

- 8.4 The member development working group reports to Governance Committee (previously to Policy and Resources Committee). Collectively, its members take responsibility for:
- ◆ leading, planning, reviewing and improving Member development generally
 - ◆ monitoring expenditure of the member development budget
 - ◆ monitoring the impact of member development, including attendance and evaluation statistics
 - ◆ monitoring the application of this policy,
- 8.5 Each member of the working group acts as a development champion within his or her political group. This involves:
- ◆ Identifying and discussing development needs that occur at a group level
 - ◆ Encouraging group colleagues to identify their individual learning needs
 - ◆ Encouraging attendance at development activities, particularly those which have been arranged in response to member requests
 - ◆ Encouraging group colleagues to evaluate learning and to provide meaningful feedback on training and trainers so that improvements can be made as necessary

Managerial and political leaders

- 8.6 The role of group leaders is to provide support and encouragement to members to attend development activities and to ensure their members' needs are met via the work of the member development working group.
- 8.7 The role of the Management Team is to identify service specific development areas and to anticipate new training needs arising from areas identified for increased focus each year as part of the Corporate

Plan. Directors also take an active role in delivering corporate members' briefings in response to identified needs.

Democratic Services Manager

- 8.9 The day-to-day management of Member development processes and activities is the responsibility of the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Member Development Working Group.

