



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

Member Development Strategy 2012 - 2013

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Welcome...

... to the Member Development Strategy for 2012/13.

This strategy sets out how Members of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council will be supported in 2012/13 to fulfil their roles and contribute to the success of the authority through development and training.

The strategy is owned by the Member Development Steering Group and has been developed by the group. It is monitored and updated at each meeting, and also scrutinised annually by the Scrutiny Commission.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council is committed to supporting and developing its Members to ensure their development needs are met to assist them in effectively supporting their communities, making effective decisions in order to support the Council's Corporate aims, and ensuring that the role of Councillor is personally fulfilling to each Member as an individual.

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1. Introduction to Member Development in Hinckley & Bosworth

With constantly increasing demands and expectations on Councillors and ever changing legislation, the need to offer relevant, efficient and up to date training is more important than ever. Providing this support in a time of economic uncertainty and continually decreasing budgets makes it essential to have a strategy which outlines why and how Member development will be delivered, but also how this can be carried out effectively and efficiently whilst maintaining the relevant protection for the authority and individual Members, keeping the public interest at the forefront of all we do and supporting the Council's vision, aims and priorities in doing so. Member Development provides Members with the tools necessary to identify, engage with and support their communities, and with the knowledge necessary to support the authority in achieving its aims and objectives.

This document, therefore, brings together the aims of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, plans of each service area and objectives of the Member Development Steering Group, and details how Members will be supported in their development, who will provide the support, and the role they will have in supporting and furthering their own development.

This document succeeds the Leicestershire & Rutland Improvement Partnership (LRIP) Member Development Strategy 2007 to which the authority was previously working, and the Hinckley & Bosworth Workforce Strategy 2010-12 which included Councillor development following the conclusion of the LRIP in 2009.

2. The Council's aims

Our vision is to make Hinckley & Bosworth 'A Borough to be proud of'.

Our aims to be proud of our:

1. Cleaner & greener neighbourhoods
2. Thriving economy
3. Safer and healthier borough
4. Strong and distinctive communities
5. Decent, well managed and affordable housing.

Our Values to improve Hinckley and Bosworth as a place to **LIVE** we will ensure:

Life quality and the environment within our community is further improved

Improved effectiveness working in partnership at a competitive price

Vulnerable people are safeguarded

Equality and fair treatment for all.

Linking Member Development to the Corporate aims

The training provided covers the main vision of making Hinckley & Bosworth a Borough to be proud of. We are proud of our commitment to officer and Member training, both of which improve services to residents of the Borough.

Some of the training provided links directly with the Council's aims, for example workshops to raise environmental awareness which contributes directly to the aim of 'cleaner & greener neighbourhoods'. There are however other ways in which Members improve understanding of environmental issues, for example learning through exercises undertaken on the Scrutiny Environment Group, visits to sustainable developments, and tours of the Council's depot and recycling facilities.

An important but more difficult area of which Members need to be aware and need to support residents is the aim of a Thriving Economy. This is achieved through training for Members of the Planning Committee to support development and subsequent improvement of urban areas and supporting employment growth, general training on supporting their communities in seeking advice and providing support and being aware of issues regarding deprivation, and ensuring value for money council services.

Learning relating to health, lifestyle, young peoples' issues and the impact of crime and domestic violence are crucial in order for Members to be able to make decisions which may affect the wellbeing of residents and for them to engage with, consult and support residents.

Learning in this area has to cover broad topics which serve to protect Members such as Safeguarding and Equalities training, as well as awareness raising activities around crime and public health.

In order to support work towards the aim of 'strong & distinctive communities', Members require understanding of consultation processes, service provision, rural issues and also an in-depth knowledge of the Borough and its communities. Most of these are covered in the Members' Induction, and Members have the opportunity to visit service areas, request meetings with officers and guided visits to public buildings and community projects.

The fifth aim of 'decent, well managed and affordable homes' can be better supported with knowledge of housing and also planning matters, again to encourage sustainable developments as a result of the planning process, and an understanding of how the authority can influence the provision of affordable housing, what support can be provided to private households, and the knowledge and personal skills to support people who are most in need.

Soft skills training, such as listening, presentation, negotiation and public speaking skills cover all of these areas and support all corporate aims in giving members the skills to communicate effectively whilst maintaining awareness of possible difficulties, personal and personality differences in order to avoid conflict to diffuse potentially difficult situations.

3. [Service Improvement Plans](#)

Each service area of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has a Service Improvement Plan. This document sets out the targets in each service area, updates on progress under each of these targets, and highlights and monitors the main risks.

Service Improvement Plans for 2011 - 2014 can be found by clicking on the relevant heading below:

- [Accountancy](#)
- [Corporate Services](#)
- [Estates & Asset Management](#)
- [ICT](#)
- [Procurement & Payments](#)
- [Revenues & Benefits](#)
- [Cultural Services](#)
- [Development Services](#)
- [Environmental Health](#)
- [Housing & Community Safety](#)
- [Business, contracts & Street Scene Services](#)

Executive Members have regular meetings with Chief Officers and Heads of the services for which they are responsible. These meetings can include information and knowledge sharing and updating on requirements. Executive Members attend training as deemed appropriate for their role.

4. The Member Development Steering Group

The Member Development Steering Group consists of a 'core' group of five Councillors from both political groups and the Labour representative, however all Councillors are invited, and encouraged to attend, the meetings of the Steering Group. The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the opposition group, relevant Executive Member and Member Development Champion are on this group, providing a mix of newer and more experience councillors. The group is chaired by the Leader of Council.

The group meets on a regular basis to monitor progress with regard to Member development, lead current projects and deal with any other issues which concern the wellbeing of Members, for example decisions regarding the extent of Member information to publish on the website.

The main objectives of the Member Development Steering Group are:

- To ensure Member development is embedded into the authority;
- To ensure Member and officer support for Member development at all levels;
- To ensure that all Members are training to a level at least appropriate to that required by their roles and responsibilities, as outlined in their role description;
- To raise awareness of Member development;
- To ensure effective training is provided to a high level whilst achieving value for money;
- That evaluation processes are in place to assess the value for money of training and to quantify improvements achieved both for the authority and the individual;
- To lead work towards the East Midlands Councillor Development Charter;
- To seek and take advantage of opportunities to work and develop in partnership across the tiers of local government, with other community groups and with other authorities sub-regionally, regionally or nationally;
- To guide the process of assessing Members' development needs and development and delivery of the resulting training programme;
- To monitor the Member development budget, and make decisions on the use of the budget;
- To represent the wider Membership in matters regarding Member support and wellbeing.

The Member Development Steering Group will realise these objectives by:

- Leading Member development and its related policies and strategies;
- Identifying learning opportunities in all formats, not just organised training sessions;
- Disseminating information to all Members;
- Ensuring that Member development activities are communicated both internally and externally;
- Ensuring that there is a strategy in place and that progress against the strategy is monitored;
- Ensuring that training opportunities are accessible to all;
- Ensuring training is relevant and timely;
- Ensuring that the objectives of training sessions are clearly outlined prior to commencement;
- Encouraging take-up of training and sanctioning non-attendance at relevant training;

- Ensuring that the Council's equalities policy is adhered to, both equality in access to training and ensuring consideration of equalities is embedded in all areas of a Councillor's work and decision making.

5. Member Champions

The authority has Member Champions in place for various services including Young People, Older People and Member Development. The role of these Members is to act as a 'champion' for their area of expertise, both within the authority and as a representative of the authority, for example on the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Member Development Network.

The Champion for Member Development sits on the Member Development Steering Group.

6. East Midlands Councillor Development Charter

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council signed up to achieving the Councillor Development Charter in 2006 in conjunction with the other Leicestershire authorities in the Leicestershire & Rutland Improvement Partnership (LRIP). The authority led work on Member Development within the LRIP and is now committed to achieving the Charter in 2012. The Member Development Steering Group has given its commitment to leading this work and it is therefore priority area for the Steering Group.

The Charter sets standards for Member Development across the East Midlands and covers all aspects of learning, development and Member support.

7. Processes and tools in Member Development

Induction

Following Borough Council elections, Members will have access to a full induction programme.

The induction process commences at the time of nomination for election. All candidates are sent a copy of the draft Induction Programme, calendar of meetings, information about the duties of a councillor and useful contacts.

Approximately one week after the election, an open evening is held which all Members must attend in order to complete important documentation, collect essential items such as door entry cards and sign up to training events. On arrival at the event both new and returning Members are supplied with a Member Handbook. The handbook contains forms to complete, a copy of the Council's Constitution, the calendar of meetings, an induction programme, information and useful contacts for each service area and important information on data protection and council protocol. The open evening also provides an opportunity to meet officers and get to know other Councillors.

Following the open evening there is a programme of induction events which includes mandatory, advisable and optional training. The events are prioritised so that training on topics such as Planning, which is mandatory for members of the Planning Committee, take place early on in the programme due to the need for the Committee to meet regularly and therefore early in the cycle. The events that are less urgent are spaced out over the ensuing four months to avoid overloading Members.

The success of the induction programme as a whole is evaluated as part of the first round of Development Needs Assessments.

Mentoring

Mentoring is encouraged as a way of learning from those more experienced councillors. Whilst a formal programme of mentoring was not run by officers following the 2011 elections, this was arranged within the political groups. Each new Councillor had a mentor who was an experienced councillor and was able to advise and support new Members. Should mentoring not be arranged within political groups, officers would arrange a programme and training for mentors would be provided.

Development Needs Assessments and Personal Development Plans

Since 2005 Members have had the opportunity to have personal development plans. These result from a process which starts with development needs assessments, in which Members discuss their development needs on a one-to-one basis. The assessments look back over training and development since the previous assessment (including the induction, if relevant) and assess the value, then go on to look at areas for development measured against the requirements of the relevant role description(s), the Council's priorities, the Political Skills framework and soft skills.

Following the needs assessments, individual Personal Development Plans are drafted which include a summary of training undertaken and a future training plan. A further outcome from

the assessments is the development of a training programme which addresses the priority needs.

Role profiles

In 2009 the Council adopted role profiles as part of the Constitution. These covered the roles of ward Councillor, Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member, Leader of an opposition group, Deputy Leader of an opposition group, Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission, Chairman of a Select Committee, Chairman of the Standards Committee, Chairman of the Planning Committee, Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committees, Chairman of the Personnel Committee and Chairman of the Appeals Panel. These role descriptions are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. Since adoption, a further role profile for Member of the Appeals Panel has been added.

8. Officer support for Member Development

Member Development is embedded into the culture of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council. Senior Officers (Strategic Leadership Board and Corporate Operations Board) actively encourage Member Development and run many of the training events themselves.

There are officers within the authority with Corporate and operational responsibility for Member Development, and this is listed in the relevant job description. Members are aware of the officers responsible for Member Development and are comfortable requesting their assistance.

9. Providing Development opportunities on reduced budgets

It has always been important to monitor and control spend on Member training, as whilst it benefits the community, public money should still be subject to rigorous checks and challenge. However in light of the current economic climate it is inevitable that, as in all other areas of the authority, the budget and related spend will continually decrease over the next few years.

It is therefore necessary to review the way training, and more specifically learning opportunities, is financed, provided, and benefits are maximised. In order to make the most effective use of the Member Training budget, the following is proposed for 2012/13:

- maximise benefits from any learning opportunities, whether it be a formal training session or a workshop which introduces a new topic and therefore allows knowledge building;
- increase the amount of training provided in partnership with other authorities both regionally or sub-regionally;
- Encourage knowledge sharing following attendance at a training event, whereby the information learned is shared with colleagues;
- Use knowledge websites to increase awareness of particular issues;
- Use online training modules, such as via Learning Pool.

10. Evaluation of training and development

Evaluation is undertaken throughout the year, both formally via 'happy sheets' and informally through ad hoc discussions with Members following an learning or knowledge sharing exercise. More detailed evaluation takes place during the Development Needs Assessment discussions, when Members have had the opportunity to use the skills learned during development events and can objectively assess the value of what has been learned.

A new evaluation strategy has now been developed which commences before the Member has attended the training event, asking them to assess their current level of knowledge and state what they hope to achieve from the event. Immediately following the event attendees are asked to rate the event and their immediate feelings about their learning experience, then three months after the event they are asked to assess their level of knowledge as a result of the event, how they have used the knowledge gained, and therefore evaluating the true value of the event to the individual, the community and the authority.

Information gained from the evaluation process is shared with and monitored by the Member Development Steering Group and the Senior Members' group and is used to inform future training provision.

11. Monitoring and review of the strategy

This Strategy is owned by the Member Development Steering Group, who will be responsible for monitoring progress against it at each meeting and actively reviewing it every six months.

The Democratic Services Officer is responsible for maintaining and updating the Strategy and any related action plans.