



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Destrìck Cooncil

Elected Member Learning and Development Policy

Approved on : 28 October 2021

Minute Reference: C490/21

Elected Member Learning and Development Policy

1. Preamble

This policy defines the Council's approach to Member learning and development which is directed by the high standards required by the Northern Ireland Elected Member Development Charter, which Council has achieved and will continue to maintain. The achievement of this standard exemplifies the quality of Council's Member Development practices and encourages continual improvement in this area.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the learning and development of all Elected Members of Council.

3. Definitions

3.1 Personal Development Plan

A structured framework to identify an individual Member's current level of skills and knowledge and their development needs in their role of Councillor.

3.2 Corporate Learning and Development Programme

A list of all learning and development activities to be offered to all Members. Includes the title of the activity, the date scheduled, the link to corporate objectives and the provider.

3.3 Member Learning and Development Record

An individual record for each Member of all learning and development undertaken during their time in Council.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Elected Member Development Group

- To establish priorities for the learning and development of Members, linked to the Council's corporate objectives.
- To approve the annual and subsequent amendments to the Corporate and Members Personal Learning and Development Plans.
- To cascade information presented to the Member Learning and Development Working Group to all party members.
- To be a Champion for Member development through maintaining and encouraging Member commitment to the continuous learning and development of all Members and acknowledging the pivotal role which Member learning and development plays in the effective operation of Council business.
- To monitor the application of the Member Learning and Development Policy.
- To review the effectiveness of Member learning and development to identify positive impact and action any identified areas of improvement
- To strive for best practice and continual improvement and be a leading Council in the area of Member learning and development.
- To ensure an adequate budget is allocated to Member learning and development to monitor the effective utilisation of this budget.
- To ensure Member learning and development is Member led.
- To promote and monitor Member participation in learning and development activities to ensure accessibility for all Members.
- To approve an annual action plan and monitor progress at each meeting.
- To develop and regularly review Member role profiles.

4.2 Elected Members

- To commit to their own personal continuous learning and development.
- To participate in the Personal Development Process and attend all courses identified.
- To complete evaluation forms at the end of every session and post evaluations at least three months after the session.
- To share all conference papers in the Members electronic library.
- To be involved in activities which inform and encourage individuals to consider a career as a Councillor
- Each Member to attend training identified from their individual Personal Development Plan and all training identified as mandatory for all Members.
- To participate (if required) in any reaccreditation assessment processes for the Elected Member Development Charter Plus award.

4.3 Party Leaders

- To encourage commitment among Party members to their continuous learning and development.
- To encourage the sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills between Party members.
- To provide mentoring opportunities to new and existing Members.
- To encourage all Members to participate in the Personal Development Plan process and the training courses offered in the Member Learning and Development Programme.
- To identify succession planning opportunities among Party members and ensure that associated development needs are either addressed through the Council PDP process or scheduled by the Party.

4.4 Democratic Services and Improvement Unit

- To be responsible for the servicing of the Member Development Group.
- To present relevant reports to the Member Development Group, Council and the Senior Leadership Team on learning and development matters.
- To maintain the Members electronic library with all training slides and papers from learning and development activities arranged for Members.
- To facilitate the annual Personal Development Planning process with Members.
- To source and organise all Member learning and development activities arising from the PDP process and the Corporate Learning and Development Programme.
- To issue and collect Member evaluation forms following each Learning and Development activity organised by Council and at least three months following the activity
- To assess the impact of all learning and development activities.
- To maintain the Northern Ireland Member Development Charter Plus accreditation.

4.5 Senior Leadership Team

- To identify learning and development needs of Members applicable to the work of Directorates/Support Functions and corporate priorities for inclusion in the Corporate Member Learning and Development Programme.
- Furthermore to commit where appropriate and where resources are available, to the provision of in house officers to deliver training to Members.
- To identify opportunities for Member Champions in designated areas of Council business.
- To consider an annual report on the effectiveness of Member Learning and Development.
- To identify and participate in joint Member and officer development activities.

4.6 Chief Executive

- To ensure corporate commitment to the continuous learning and development of Members.

5. General Principles and Procedures

5.1 Principles

Council recognises the complex and ever changing environment impacting on the roles and responsibilities of Elected Members and the diverse range of knowledge and skills required of them to enable them to effectively carry out their roles. Council also acknowledges that Elected Members who have the required level of skills and knowledge are integral to the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives. Effective learning and development of Members is a key means of ensuring that Members can make a productive contribution to the fulfillment of the Council's corporate objectives.

5.2 Procedures

5.2.1 Identification of Members Learning and Development Needs

- All Members will be encouraged to complete a Personal Development Plan or review on an annual basis. The Senior Leadership Team will also be asked to identify learning and development needs of Members applicable to the corporate priorities and the work of each Directorate/Strategic Support Unit. All identified learning and development needs must link to the Council's corporate objectives.
- The needs identified through the above processes will be considered for inclusion in the Corporate Learning and Development Programme.
- Additional learning and development activities can be added to the Programme as the need arises.
- The Corporate Learning and Development Programme will be presented to the Elected Member Development Group in the first instance, and then to Council for approval.

5.2.2 Evaluation of Learning and Development Activities

- At the end of every learning and development activity, each participating Member will be asked to complete an evaluation to confirm if the learning and development objectives have been met, that Members have acquired an increase in their skills and knowledge, and that value for money has been achieved. A further evaluation will take place at least three months after the training session.
- Additionally, Members attending a conference will be asked to complete a post conference feedback form.

- An annual evaluation will then be completed on the effectiveness of all learning and development activities. The findings will be reported in the first instance to the Elected Member Development Group and then to Council and the Senior Leadership team.
- Any findings and suggested areas of improvement will be considered in the development of subsequent activities.

6. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy does not contravene any legislation and is in accordance with Council policies.

7. Linkage to Corporate Plan

The policy will impact positively on the achievement of all of the Council's corporate objectives within the Corporate and Performance Improvement Plan. Additionally, effective Member learning and development will contribute to achieving Council's commitment to its cross cutting themes of promoting equality and sustainable development.

8. Impact Assessment

8.1 Screening and Equality Impact Assessment

The Member Learning and Development Programme will be available to all Elected Members. Member's preferences on the scheduling of training sessions will be sought and every effort will be made to ensure that sessions are scheduled at times, which meet the needs of the majority of Members. To ensure accessibility for Members who have other employment, evening sessions will be offered where demand exists. A completed Screening Questionnaire has been completed and the policy has been screened out.

8.2 Impact on staff and Financial Resources

There is an allocated budget for Member Learning and Development. It is anticipated that all Member Learning and Development needs can be met within this budget. In any instance however where the budget is not adequate, financial provision can be secured from within the overall Elected Member budget.

Where possible and when appropriate, internal resources will be utilised in the delivery of development programmes. This will be accommodated within existing budgets, as far as practicable.

8.3 Sustainable Development

The Member Learning and Development Programme will provide training to Members on sustainable development.

8.4 Other Impacts

There are no other impacts in implementing this policy.

9. Communication Strategy

This policy and subsequent reviews will be communicated to Elected Members at a meeting of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee. A briefing on the policy will also be provided to the Senior Management Team and to all relevant staff within the Democratic Services and Improvement Unit.

10. Risk Management

Failure to effectively implement this policy reduces the quality of decision making at Council and the optimum achievement of Council's corporate objectives. Additionally, failure to implement this policy increases the risk of Council not being successful in securing re-accreditation for the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development.

11. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently should amendments be required.

Document Number	
Responsible Officer	Head of Democratic Services and Improvement Unit
Contact Officer	Democratic Services Officer Telephone: (028 71) 253253 Ext 4204 Email: sharon.maxwell@derrystrabane.com
Approval	Version 1.0 Governance and Strategic Planning 6 October 2015 Minute Ref. GSP138/15 Ratified at Meeting of Council: 29 October 2015 Minute Ref. C 244/15.
Effective Date	30 October 2015
Modifications	Version 2.0 Governance and Strategic Planning Committee 4 April 2017 Minute Ref: GSP74/17 Meeting of Council 27 April 2017 Minute Ref: C113/17 Version 2.1 Governance and Strategic Planning Committee 1 September 2020 Minute Ref: GSP123/20 Meeting of Council 24 September 2020 Minute Ref: C274/20 Version 2.2 Governance and Strategic Planning Committee 5 October 2021 Minute Ref: GSP168/21 Meeting of Council 28 October 2021 Minute Ref: C490/21
Superseded Documents	

	Elected Member Learning and Development Policy v2.1.
Review Date	<p>September 2023, however, the policy will be reviewed sooner in the event of any one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure or weakness in the Strategy is highlighted • Changes in legislative requirements • Changes in Government/ Council or other directives and requirements.
File Number	
Associated Documents	

This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats (CD, MP3, DAISY) and minority languages.

For further information on alternative formats please contact

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