

Member Development Plan

Member Training and Development Plan Introduction from the Leader and the Chief Executive

Everyone needs to have the right training to do their job if they are going to be able to perform their duties efficiently. In the demanding and fast changing environment of local government, Councillors more than ever before, have a responsibility to make sure they get the training they need to serve their constituents.

It doesn't matter whether you are:

- a newly elected Councillor
- a long-serving Member of the Council or
- in a new position on a regulatory committee such as Licensing or Planning.

Whatever your role within the Council, you need to be trained and developed to help you do the things you need to do more efficiently and more effectively.

This Member Development Plan has been put together

- to ensure that you have the opportunities to develop and
- to provide you with the professional skills you need to carry out your role as an elected representative.

You owe it to yourself, the people you represent and the council itself to take advantage of the Member Development Plan. The plan will ensure that you are fully equipped to serve the needs of the wider community of West Lindsey. We hope that you will also take the opportunity to attend the sessions on offer.

Councillor Jeff Summers
Leader of the Council

Manjeet Gill
Chief Executive

Declaration of Commitment to Member Training and Development

West Lindsey District Council is intent on meeting the needs of its community. We are committed to the training and development of our elected Members and understand the need for continuous improvement.

We will fully support our Members and help them to play their vital role in modernising local government, by:

- having a statement of intent
- ensuring that all Members are made aware of training and development opportunities
- having a process to identify individual development needs, which involves Members
- having an officer allocated to assist Members and groups in identifying needs and providing information on resources
- having a plan to meet the training and development needs of elected Members
- implementing the plan.

Councillor Jeff Summers
Leader of the Council

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Chief Executive

1. Introduction

West Lindsey District Council's Elected Members seek to serve the communities they represent and the District as a whole to the best of their ability. To do this, the Council has committed itself to ensuring that all Members are supported in developing the necessary skills required to perform their duties effectively.

It is the role of elected members to develop relevant policies, to represent the needs and interests of the whole district and the communities and to be an advocate for their community.

Members have a responsibility to contribute towards the good governance of the area and to encourage public participation and involvement in decision making.

It is also the duty of members to respond to constituency local queries impartially and fairly, to be involved in decision making and maintain the highest standards of ethics and conduct.

To support this aim this plan has been developed and sets out the vision and aims of Member Development, the values to which the Council will adhere and how development will be identified, delivered and managed. It is consistent with the Council's overall vision as set out in the Corporate Plan.

This represents a considerable commitment by the Council. However, the wide range of responsibilities faced by Elected Members require this level of commitment and it is essential if we are to achieve the future priorities within the Corporate Plan.

2. Context

People who are elected as Members will have their own political views and core social values. They will receive political leadership and support from their political group.

This Plan is about the dedicated support that will be given to Elected Members to help them fulfil their roles and contribute to the success and objectives of the Council.

This Plan also recognises that Elected Members are volunteers. It strives to help them seek a balance between their demanding roles inside and outside the Council.

3. Vision, Values and Behaviours

The vision for the Member Development Plan is that all Elected Members have all the necessary skills to perform effectively in their current or potential future roles for the council and to contribute to the delivery of the six Themes of the Corporate Plan.

- (a) Open for Business
- (b) People First
- (c) Asset Management
- (d) Central Lincolnshire Local Plan
- (e) Partnerships/Devolution
- (f) Excellent Value for Money Services

To help achieve this vision the key values that underpin the strategy are :
(following the staff/member workshops that took place last year)

We Focus on Communities and Customers First, we will:

- listen, understand and respond to all our community and customer needs
- deliver community and customer needs
- help communities and customers to help themselves
- have effective networks with our partners and communities
- supply information and deliver services that customers can rely on and trust.

We are Creative and Business Smart, we will

- know what our priorities are
- give solutions that improve income or streamline overhead costs
- understand our finances and costs
- encourage brave ideas, seize opportunities and take managed risks
- work efficiently and concentrate on the things that make a difference
- see mistakes as opportunities to learn, develop and grow

We are a “Can-do” Council, we will

- think positively
- be adaptable and flexible in all that we do
- understand and evaluate the risks
- sort out and own problems and solutions
- embrace new ideas, put them into action and make changes
- embrace new technology to help us with new ways of working

We are One Council, we will

- get everyone involved in making informed decisions
- respect each other

- work together for the benefit of all
- value and make use of the skills of all staff, partners, Councillors and the community
- be open, honest and trust each other
- all take responsibility in managing health and safety risks

We Communicate Effectively, we will

- aim to use language that is understood by everyone
- use consistent messages
- check that people understand the messages
- actively seek constructive comments and feedback from the community, partners, councillors and staff
- provide clear and constructive feedback.

4. Aims

The plan has the following aims:

1. To create a clear framework for the development of Elected Members based upon their individual needs and the needs of the Council as a whole.
2. To ensure all Elected Members have the skills that are at a level that is at least suitable for their roles and responsibilities.
3. To ensure Elected Members have the skills and knowledge necessary to lead the delivery of high quality public services for West Lindsey District Council through the new ways of working.
4. To ensure that Elected Members feel confident to undertake their roles.
5. To ensure that all Elected Members are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities, legal requirements and matters of probity.
6. To support the continued development of Elected Members and help prepare them for roles that they may fulfil in the future.
7. To ensure a consistency of approach to Elected Member development.

5. Overall Management and Monitoring of the Plan

The Governance and Audit Committee will:

1. Regularly review the plan to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of Elected Members and the Council.
2. Approve the methods of identifying and assessing Elected Member development needs.
3. Identify factors either within or outside the Council that may create training needs such as changes to service delivery mechanisms or legislation.
4. Identify the appropriate training required as relevant to the various roles undertaken by Elected Members.
5. Identify which Elected Members may have the skills and knowledge to act in a role as trainer or facilitator for other Elected Members and provide the support required to undertake this role.
6. Recommend suitable and cost-effective development programmes.
7. Monitor how training and development is being carried out, and its effectiveness.
8. Monitor Elected Member involvement in the training and development provided and take relevant action, as required, to improve attendance.
9. Monitor the use of and resources required to support the Elected Member development plan including identifying sources of external funding and potential for partnership working/shared training delivery.
10. Produce annual report on member development for Governance and Audit Committee.

7. How Member development needs will be met

Firstly and most importantly if we can facilitate training jointly with officers, partners or other authorities we will. In order to support the diverse development needs of Elected Members and learning styles and range of individual circumstances, development needs will be met from a range of options. In some cases these can be delivered through the Council's own internal resources. Where necessary, however, the council will identify and buy in specialist providers with proven track records of effectiveness and value for money. If enough members need the training it will be facilitated at West Lindsey District Council premises.

Potential development delivery methods may include:

- Training courses
- Informal in house briefings and workshops
- External conference and seminars
- Written learning materials
- Peer mentors
- E-learning packages
- Visits to other councils or relevant partners
- Shadowing opportunities
- Sharing of knowledge amongst other Elected Members
- Research or preparation for speech delivery or scrutiny for example, with potentially preparation of case studies for others to benefit from.

Elected Members will be encouraged to be involved in the development of fellow Members where appropriate by leading workshops, disseminating expert knowledge and offering mentoring. The delivery of these activities will also be considered as contributing towards Member's own continued professional development and can be a method of achieving items on their personal development Plan.

8. Resources

Each year the Council will identify the resources that can be devoted to Elected Member Development. These resources will include:

- Financial budget and any other support available
- Member support staff within the Democratic Services/HR Teams Places available/sponsored through external funding on specific programmes (for example Leadership Academy)
- Relevant opportunities for learning through seminars, conferences or visits hosted by partners.

تامول عملہ زم دیزم قباصع 676676 72410

За повече информация пръстен 01427 676676

Lisainformatsiooni ring 01427 676676

अधिक जानकारी के लिए रिंग 01427 676676

További információ gyűrű 01427 676676

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رے ٹل رے یشوگنا 676676 72410 رے تامول عملہ دیزم

If you would like a copy of
this in large, clear print,
audio, Braille or in another
language, please telephone

01427 676676

Guildhall, Marshall's Yard
Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2NA
Tel: 01427 676676 Fax: 01427 675170
DX 27214 Gainsborough

www.west-lindsey.gov.uk