Member Development Plan 2016 – 2019

Blackpool Council

To the Member Development Plan 2016 - 2019

This Plan has been developed by the cross-party Member Training Panel, following consultation with all Blackpool elected members and key stakeholders within the Council. It demonstrates the Council's commitment to developing all our elected members, to ensure that they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to undertake their varied roles effectively.

The past 12 months has been very busy for member training and development, with a full induction programme following the Local Elections in May 2015,

which was designed to ensure that all new members were able to 'hit the ground running' and take up their positions on the various Council committees with confidence.

In addition to committee specific training, there has also been a focus on introductory training to key areas of responsibility within the Council, such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Dementia Awareness and the role of members as Corporate Parents. The three member development priorities that have been identified for the period 2016 to 2019 will help to build on this introductory training, as well as addressing many other areas of significance for elected members.

Via the Member Training Panel, we will ensure that learning and development focusses on how to address and respond to the many social and economic challenges facing Blackpool and the Council. The Panel will also take a lead as we move towards reassessment of the Member Development Charter over the next 12 months.

Cllr Graham Cain,

Chairman of the Member Training Panel

Contents

1.   Recap of the last 10 months – the Member Induction Programme 2015

Following the Local Elections in May 2015, a Member Induction Programme was provided for the 8 newly elected members. This was an intensive period of learning for new members, which was split into two parts, with initial training running from 11th May up to the summer recess, followed by the second part of the programme, from September to December 2015.

What learning opportunities were provided for members?

Committee-based training

Introductory training to all formal Committees ➡ To provide information relating to the roles of the different committees and individual and collective member responsibilities. Enabled members to 'hit the ground running', providing them with the information needed to undertake the procedural aspects of their roles.

In-depth committee specific sessions for committee members ➡ To address committee-based skills, such as the role of scrutiny and, for the Regulatory Committees, legislation-based topics. Members were equipped with the introductory knowledge required to undertake committee roles.

Council structure

Marketplace event with members of the Corporate Leadership Team ➡ To provide new members with the opportunity to meet the Directors on a one-to-one basis. Enabled new members and Directors to 'put names to faces' and find out introductory information about each other and their areas of responsibility.

Departmental briefings ➡ To provide department specific information, relating to key officers in the Council, departmental responsibilities and priorities for each service. Members increased their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the different council directorates and their particular priority areas.

Behavioural training

Members' Code of Conduct ➡ To provide an overview of the Code of Conduct and expectations regarding elected member behaviour. Members' understood their responsibilities regarding the Code of Conduct.

Public speaking ➡ To increase members' confidence when speaking to groups of people and at meetings. Members' were equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively speak in public.

How to engage with communities effectively ➡ To build awareness of the different methods of engaging with individuals and community groups and how to deal with constituent casework effectively.

Chairing skills ➡ To provide members with the skills to effectively chair meetings, within their formal council committee roles and when attending meetings within the community.

iPad set up and introductory
one-to-one and group training

A significant developmental area for Blackpool councillors over the last 12 months, to enable the move to paperless working and electronic access to committee agendas and Council emails.

Briefings on key areas of Council responsibility…

Child Sexual Exploitation

Corporate Parenting

Dementia

To provide members with an overview of key important areas of Council responsibilities, relating to vulnerable groups and how these areas link to committee and scrutiny roles of members. Introductory sessions to be followed up by a rolling programme of training on an annual basis.

Of course, the period of induction is not limited to these initial months, as ongoing training is to continue to be provided on a whole range of topics. The provision of training throughout 2015 and early 2016, which has seen over 130 sessions being run for members, has provided the building the blocks of learning for the next few years, with more in-depth training to follow.

The feedback received from the Member Induction Programme so far has helped to identify learning and development priorities for the next few years and this will help to structure requirements for the Induction Programme in 2019.

2.   Member Development Priorities for 2016 – 2019

How have the development priorities been identified? The consultation process.

Consultation has taken place with all members and key officers over recent months, to help to identify the member development priorities up to 2019.

- All new members have undertaken **Personal Development Plans**, to discuss learning so far and areas for future development, on a one-to-one basis. Personal plans are to be rolled out to all members over coming months.
- The **Member Training Panel**, a cross-party group of members, considered training and development as part of the Induction Programme and identified key priority areas of learning for the next few years.
- The **Leaders of the political groups** provided input into how they see their members developing and key areas for the coming years.
- **Regulatory and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen** considered training requirements from a Committee-based perspective.
- **All members** were asked to consider what personal skills they would need to help them to undertake their roles in an ever- changing environment, with reduced budgets and resources.

As well as reflecting the current training requirements of members in terms of their committee, procedural and community roles, the consultation also considered the aims within the **Council Plan 2015 – 2020: 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool' and 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'.** To undertake their varied roles effectively, members need to understand how the Council is working to improve the local economy and tackle the social, health and educational inequalities that exist within the Town and how the decisions that they make within their formal committees and partnership working impact on these.

Priorities for 2016 – 2019

As a result of this consultation process, three key development priority areas have been identified, which link the internal Council role of the elected member to the external influences within the Town and to the two Council priorities.

- ➢ **Priority 1 – The changing role of the elected member**
- ➢ **Priority 2 – Building resilience in communities we represent**
- ➢ **Priority 3 – Effective decision making, accountability and challenge**

Priority 1 – The changing role of the elected member	
The Local Authority landscape has experienced extensive change over recent years, with Councils facing increasing budgetary pressures, which has had a direct impact on the services and resources provided by the Council to communities. This, in turn, has impacted on the traditional role of the elected member, as they have had to change from a 'can do everything' approach for their constituents to a more facilitative role. Understanding how the Council works and being realistic in what can be done for constituents is key to enabling members to serve their communities effectively. There is an expectation that members will make best use of technology and develop their ICT skills, to proactively engage with the different groups within their wards and to disseminate information relating to the Channel shift programme within the Council, to their constituents. What does this mean in terms of training and delivery? • Workshops on the differences between strategic decision-making and members' 'grass roots' involvement in their communities. • Interactive training to build confidence and to develop the interpersonal skills required to respond effectively to challenge and conflict, enable difficult conversations to take place and to manage the expectations of residents, community groups, fellow councillors and officers. • A job shadowing programme to be developed, to enable members to see first-hand the services provided by the Council to residents, how they operate and how to develop constructive relationships with the different areas. • Interactive training to develop ICT skills, to enable members to locate relevant information quickly and to communicate this information effectively to their constituents. • Workshops focussing on the different communication methods available, including making use of digital media, such as social media, online blogging, online surgeries and councillor websites, as well as measuring the effectiveness of more traditional communication methods, such as face-to-face surgeries and leafleting.	**Outcomes for members** **Members will:** • **Develop an understanding of the differences between the role of members at a strategic and ward level and how this impacts on their different roles** • **Develop skills to effectively manage the different expectations of their communities** • **Increase knowledge of Council services and how these are delivered 'on the ground'** • **Develop ICT skills to effectively find and disseminate information quickly and appropriately to their communities**

Link to Council Plan: • **Priority Two - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience**	• **Develop different methods of communicating with their constituents, including through the use of digital media**
Priority 2 – Building resilience in communities we represent	

All members have a role to play in making sure that the most vulnerable in society are protected and empowering the communities that they represent. This is done most effectively when members have the relevant facts and figures at their disposal and understand how the Council and its partners operate.

A key skill for members is the ability to effectively engage with <u>all</u> areas of their communities, to be an active voice and advocate on behalf of the people they represent. To do this, members need to be aware of the key issues that impact on their wards, to enable them to identify what help and support is required to help individuals and groups move forward and make positive changes to the community. Members must, therefore, be equipped with the relevant skills, knowledge and tools to effectively identify issues within their communities, build relationships with appropriate groups and communicate messages and challenge effectively, whilst providing their residents with the knowledge and skills to access relevant information and to find their own solutions to problems.

What does this mean in terms of training and delivery?

To increase members' knowledge and understanding of the Council and its partners and how to engage community groups with their work, to help them to identify resolutions to issues:

- Briefings on how Council services are changing and what this means for constituents.
- Briefings and workshops on the roles of partners and other organisations in delivering different services to the community. A focus on how these relationships work and how members can gather relevant information to achieve positive outcomes for their communities.
- Interactive training on how to be an effective community enabler and facilitator, to help constituents and community groups access the information that they need.

Outcomes for members

Members will:
- **Increase their knowledge of the changing roles and responsibilities of the Council, partners and third sector organisations and how this impacts on their communities**
- **Develop the skills to be effective enablers and facilitators**
- **Make appropriate use of the ward enquiry system, to resolve issues and identify ward priorities**

• Training on appropriate use of the member enquiry system and how to use ward statistics to appropriately identify trends and issues within the different wards.
 	
To increase members awareness of issues linked to child poverty, health inequalities, benefits, employment issues and opportunities within the town, to empower communities, to help people to help themselves in the face of continuing budgetary pressures:
 	
• Briefings and workshops on the Council's involvement in different projects, including employment and enterprise, housing and community safety, health, safeguarding, social care, young people and volunteering, so that members can communicate these effectively to their constituents.
• Protecting the vulnerable:
   ➢ Workshops, interactive training and online learning on Child Sexual Exploitation, to develop an understanding of what it is and the role of the Council, elected members and partners in identifying those at risk and taking preventative action.
   ➢ Increase understanding of the different mental and physical health challenges within communities and how these impact on individuals and social groups.
   ➢ Briefings on the Council's responsibilities relating to child poverty
 	
Link to Council Plan:
• **Priority Two - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience**
	• **Increase their awareness of projects linked to the Council and how their constituents can benefit from these**
	• **Increase their knowledge and understanding of the factors impacting on different social groups within the town and how to increase resilience within communities**

Priority 3 – Effective decision making, accountability and challenge	
A key responsibility for elected members is to make decisions and recommendations that directly impact on the running of the Council and the services delivered to the Town. It is therefore imperative that all members understand the policies and legislation relevant to their particular roles, their accountability within the roles that they hold and how to challenge effectively. What does this mean in terms of training and delivery? • Workshops focussing on meeting procedures and the role of members on committees. • Briefings on the impact of national policy and legislation on decision making and service delivery within the Council.	

- Training for all members prior to sitting on any Regulatory Committee. To include modular-based programmes of delivery for Planning, Licensing and Audit Committees. - A programme of training on the role and power of Scrutiny, to develop the Scrutiny function. To include questioning skills, challenge and the role of the Chairman, relationships with Council officers, the Executive and external organisations and how to develop outcomes within Scrutiny meetings. - Briefings on how the infrastructure works within the town, to include parks, highways and transport. - Briefings on how Council finances work. - Workshops on the Council's companies and the roles and responsibilities of being a Company Director. **Link to Council Plan:** - **Priority One - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool** - **Priority Two - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience**	**Outcomes for members** **Members will:** - **Increase their knowledge of formal meeting procedures** - **Increase their knowledge of national and local policy and legislation and how this impacts on decision-making within the Council** - **Build their understanding of the role of Scrutiny and develop skills to effectively challenge within the Scrutiny function** - **Increase their knowledge of the infrastructure within the town and the role of the Council in delivering services to communities** - **Develop an understanding of how Council finances work and how this impacts on strategic decision-making** - **Increase their knowledge of the role of the Council's companies** - **Develop the skills to effectively challenge decisions, to provide better outcomes for communities**

3. Evaluation of member development

The effective evaluation of learning and development opportunities is important to ensure that training is meeting the needs of all members and providing value for money. In future months, there will be an increased focus on the evaluation of training opportunities, to measure learning and the effectiveness of training delivery.

What does this mean?

Members will be encouraged to reflect on all learning that they have undertaken, via pre and post-course evaluation forms, personal plans and skills assessments. Officers within Democratic Governance will play a role in this, as both members and officers will be asked to demonstrate how training has improved the performance of committees and individual members, in terms of accountability and robustness of decision-making.

4. The role of the Member Training Panel

The Member Training Panel is a cross-party group of members, with an interest in promoting learning and development with their fellow councillors. The Panel plays a key role in ensuring that the training and development provided to members meets their requirements, is delivered effectively and provides value for money.

Terms of Reference for the Panel:

1. To champion and promote learning and development among members

2. To develop a Member Development Plan, based on Council and individual priorities, and undertake timely reviews to measure progress of the Plan

3. To identity and develop suitable learning opportunities to ensure that development needs are met, including the Member Induction Programme and support throughout the term of office

4. To input into and oversee the Member Development Charter process

5. To evaluate the quality of training to ensure that training is delivered to a consistently high standard and offers value for money

6. To make recommendations to the Executive, the Council or its committees as appropriate

NORTH WEST CHARTER

on

Elected Member Development

~~~~~~

We believe that at the heart of any Local Authority dedicated to meeting the needs of its community will be a commitment to the development of its Elected Members. Members will be supported and assisted in playing their vital role in modernising local government.

Signing up to the principles of the Charter commits the local authority to work towards expressing their commitment in practice by implementing the six key points of the Charter.

- 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 strategy to meet the training and development needs of Elected Members.

- Implementing the strategy locally.

Signed by Chief Executive:

Signed by Leader:

Signed by Chair of employers' Organisation:

Signed by Leader of the Principal Opposition: