FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Updated March 2015

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1.   Introduction

1.1   Flintshire County Council aims to provide continuously improving services which inevitably means the need for Councillors to learn and embrace new roles and responsibilities.

1.2   The Council is operating in a constantly changing environment, requiring elected members and a workforce that is flexible and responsive to change. Recent Welsh Government policies have presented the authority with an extremely challenging and demanding programme which includes:-

•   A greater emphasis on working in partnership with other agencies.

•   Collaborating with other local authorities to improve service delivery.

•   Delivering efficiency savings year on year.

•   New, challenging and changing roles for elected members.

•   A strong emphasis on continuous improvement and performance measurement.

1.3   In embracing these challenges, the Council must continue to develop its members and organisation into one which:

•   Is responsive to change and looks to maximise opportunities.

•   Sets high performance standards and is not afraid to be measured by them.

•   Makes maximum use of all resources available to it.

•   Is an influential community leader.

•   Is respected as a good employer and seen as a role model by others in the community it serves.

2.   Purpose

2.1   To enable members to operate efficiently and effectively in fulfilling their various roles in achieving the Council's aims and objectives the Council has agreed to identify the learning and development needs of all Councillors. It is committed to undertaking development needs analyses which identify the

local and national, collective and individual development needs of all members.

2.2   For a number of years Flintshire County Council has adopted a proactive approach towards member development and support in the form of internally and externally facilitated presentations, seminars and workshops as well as through specific training courses. The Council has supported members' development through the allocation of a specific budget and applied its policy on an equal basis to all 70 members. In 2008 Flintshire was one of the first Councils in Wales to achieve the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) Charter for Member support and development.

3.   Member Development Strategy – Aims and Objectives

3.1   Member development refers to any development activities or training programmes specifically designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of elected members in their varied roles.

3.2   This strategy aims to provide members with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need in their current roles as set out in their various role descriptions. To ensure that this strategy meets the needs of members and the Council, activities will be properly planned, resourced, monitored and evaluated.

3.3   The strategy's main objectives are:

•   To help members in the performance of their various roles;

•   To provide an integrated induction programme and an Annual Development Programme for all members;

•   To provide support tailored to the needs of individual members based on individual training needs analysis;

•   To monitor the impact of the strategy and use feedback to improve future development activities.

3.4   The Council will provide elected members with flexible and responsive training and development that is based on individual and organisational needs. This will maximise the effectiveness of members in their various roles to ensure that Flintshire County Council will be regarded as a leader in the provision of support to members.

4. **Implementing the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development Requirements**

4.1 It is fundamental to its success that members take a leading role in its development, will oversee its implementation, willingly participate with the requirements of the Charter and play a full role in evaluating and monitoring its progress and effectiveness.

4.2 The Wales Charter for member support and development sets out a rigorous and structured approach for member development. Set out below are the Charter's main requirements and the Council's approach to their implementation:

4.3 **Members committing support to the strategy and a learning culture by participating in Charter requirements** – At a meeting of the Council on 29th January, 2008 members agreed that the Council should aim for Charter status. This was subsequently obtained in the Autumn of 2008. In October 2008 the Council was awarded the Charter. This was renewed in October 2011.

4.4 **Undertaking a training and development needs analysis with each member to identify individual and collective development requirements.** Each member has the opportunity of having an annual personal development meeting with a senior member to identify their training and development needs. Each meeting will consider any role description the member has.

4.5 **Creating personal support plans for members**. At the personal development meetings each member participating will complete their personal support plan with assistance from the senior member present.

4.6 **Responding to the development needs of members** identified in their personal support plans through the Annual Member Development Programme and other means but recognising activities may need to be prioritised according to demand and within available resources.

4.7 **Devising and publishing an Annual Member Development Programme** that sets out development opportunities available to members. This will be informed by the personal support plans and by questionnaires to all members

4.8 **Members are supported with role descriptions** – These have been drafted and agreed for the following roles; Leader; Deputy Leader; Cabinet Members; Chairs and members of Overview and Scrutiny, Chair of Planning, Licensing and Audit Committees; Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

5.   Strategy Delivery

5.1   Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy is overseen by the Democratic Services Committee. This Committee is politically balanced and meets regularly to agree and review training and development activities for elected members and oversee the implementation of this Strategy.

5.2   The purpose of the Committee's work in this respect will be: -

• To establish a comprehensive and robust member training and development process using the principles of the member support Charter.

• To ensure that member development becomes part of the overall mainstream organisational activity.

• To advise on members' support services, particularly member development

• Coordination of the annual member development programme

• To monitor progress against the Strategy's objectives (see paragraph 3 above)

5.3   All member training and development activities provided as a result of this Strategy will:

• Be secured from the most effective and appropriate training providers or facilitators from within or outside the authority.

• Respond to the expressed needs of members for method and style of delivery.

• Be provided taking into account the principles of the Council's equalities policies and be arranged at convenient times and locations.

6. Evaluation of the Strategy

6.1   Progress with the strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the Democracy & Governance Manager, Member Engagement Manager, Corporate Training Manager and most importantly by the Democratic Services Committee.

6.2   The development of members as a result of the activities will be assessed by themselves with support of senior members if participating in the personal support and development meetings.

7. Resources

7.1   A sum of £6,122 was included in the Council's 2014/15 budget for members training and development activities.

7.2   The Democracy & Governance Manager has overall responsibility for member development and is supported in this on a practical day-to-day basis by the Member Engagement Manager and the Corporate Training Manager with additional support being given by Members Services. Other officers will be expected to support this by providing in-house development activities.