

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Tuesday, 27 July 2021
Member Development Strategy 2021-26

Portfolio:	Cllr Philip Dixon – Customer and Locality Services
Report from:	David Nicholson, HR Lead Specialist
Report Author:	Dawn Bradley – OD Specialist
Wards:	All
Forward Plan:	Not applicable

1.0 Expected Outcome

- 1.1 The South Lakeland District Council Plan sets out how we aim to achieve our vision of “working together to make South Lakeland the best place to live, work and explore”. Our Members are central in making this vision a reality.

The purpose of the Member Development Strategy 2021-26 is to set out how we will support Members by ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles in the fast paced world of the 21st Century as effectively as possible.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:-

- (1) Approve the updated Member Development Strategy 2021-26**

3.0 Background and Proposals

- 3.1 The Member Support Strategy 2017-2020 was reviewed and approved in 2019 by the Member Support Steering Group (MSSG). A full review and refresh was therefore required due to the 2020 expiration date.
- 3.2 The new strategy, titled ‘Member Development Strategy 2021-2026’, sets out in a streamlined and simplified way, how Members will be supported in their roles.
- 3.3 The objectives of the Strategy have been clearly set out, along with the Key Responsibilities of those involved and the Learning and Development opportunities that are available to Members.
- 3.4 There has been an emphasis on supporting Members in a way that is convenient to both Members and Officers. Since the last strategy was implemented, a suite of Member specific e-learning courses has been introduced and the annual performance development conversations have been moved to an electronic format.
- 3.5 The move to online meetings arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, supported by training, has been very successful, with Member participation in council meetings increasing from 81% in the pre-pandemic period June 2019 – November 2019 to 89% in the most recent period November 2020 – May 2021. This involved training all Members in a completely new software package and the redesign of our processes to facilitate the change.

- 3.6 To further demonstrate the success of our commitment to Member development, our records show that over the last year the Council has received no specific complaints of conduct about District Councillors related to their roles as Council Members.
- 3.7 During effectiveness reviews of the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committees, no further training and development requirements were identified over and above what is already being delivered by the Member Development Strategy.
- 3.8 There are future plans to introduce performance measures to assess engagement with Member development opportunities, in order to ensure our continued commitment.
- 3.9 The mandatory and optional training section was previously approved in 2019. There has been one minor change to the mandatory training list, which is the addition of Introduction to Public Sector Finance training for all Members. This was suggested by Corporate Management Team and agreed with the Chair of Member Support Steering Group.
- 3.10 Due to the streamlined nature of the new Strategy, the timeframe for a further review is five years, however the Member Support Steering Group will carry out an annual review to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Member Support Steering Group, the HR Lead Specialist, the Organisation Development Specialist and a Case Management Officer.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative option is to not have a strategy for supporting Members in their roles. This would leave the Council open to risk if a Member breached UK legislation or internal procedure and had not received adequate training.

6.0 Links to Council Priorities

- 6.1 Linked to the Constitution

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 7.1 Not applicable

Human Resources

- 7.2 Not applicable

Legal

- 7.3.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement for Members to complete training in relation to their respective roles as Councillors, the Council is exposed to a significant risk that it might inadvertently be in breach of legislative requirements with regards to other aspects of the Council's functions; for example, a breach of equality and diversity legislation due to a lack of training.
- 7.3.2 It is considered good practice for local authorities to ensure all Members receive regular training in respect of the authority's functions and other matters affecting the way in which Members transact business.

Health, Social, Economic and Environmental

- 7.4 Have you completed a Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment? No
- 7.5 If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons: Not applicable

Equality and Diversity

7.7 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No

7.8 If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons: Not applicable

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Recommendation not approved	Risk of breach of UK legislation if Members do not complete necessary training	Approve the strategy

Contact Officers

david.nicholson@southlakeland.gov.uk

Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Member Development Strategy 2021-2026
2	Member Development Strategy 2021-2026 Appendix A Role Profiles
3	Member Development Strategy 2021-2026 Appendix B Training Matrix

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
Previous report on the Member Development Strategy/ Role Profiles and Training Matrix	Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 9 October 2019, 6.30 p.m. (southlakeland.gov.uk)

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	06/05/2021	10/05/2021
Monitoring Officer	06/05/2021	06/05/2021
CMT	05/05/2021	05/05/2021

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	Report Author
Human Resources Lead Specialist	Report author
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	26/04/2021
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	27/07/2021
MSSG	26/04/2021