

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**COUNCIL - 25 JUNE 2009****ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY****Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present for Council's approval, an Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council at its meeting on 23 April 2009 (Item 5, Page 693, 07/12) received a report and draft Strategy in relation to Elected Member Learning and Development.
- 2.2 The report highlighted that:-
- the Elected Members' role had become more complex;
 - Local Government was subject to constant change; and
 - Elected Members were integral to achieving the Council's strategic objectives and ensuring the delivery of high quality services.
- 2.3 The report proposed that the introduction of an effective and co-ordinated Learning and Development Strategy, that provided for inclusive and flexible learning opportunities, that would support Elected Members at individual, role specific and corporate levels, was required.
- 2.4 The report made reference to the recent report by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (September 2008) which recognised that all Elected Members should have a role description and participate in training needs assessment and have a personal development plan. The report also advised that the Scottish Government had accepted this proposal in principle and also accepted the importance of training in enabling Elected Members to perform their duties effectively. The Scottish Government also recognised that CoSLA, SOLACE and the Improvement Service had a role to play in assisting Elected Member development initiatives.
- 2.5 The Improvement Service set up in 2005 to help improve the efficiency, quality and accountability of local public services in Scotland provides advice, consultancy and programme support to Councillors and their partners. One of the core working areas of the Service is in Elected Member development. The Improvement Service has drafted a National Development Strategy for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government. The key aims of the Strategy include the Improvement Service providing a national resource in terms of planning, development and providing advice and expertise to support Elected Member development needs. However, the Strategy also recognises

that any programme of development activity should begin at the level of the individual Council. Further information on the development of the strategy is awaited.

- 2.6 The report to the Council meeting in April, also made reference to the Accounts Commission's coverage in its most recent report "Overview of the Local Authority Audits 2008" (February 2009) which also recognised the importance of continuous development of Elected Members and that report concluded that personal development activity was essential to support Elected Members in carrying out their demanding and complex roles. The Accounts Commission have identified that all Elected Members should have a personal development plan setting out their training needs and progress.

3. ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.1 The previous report and draft Strategy outlined the Council's commitment to supporting the development of all Elected Members to enable them to perform effectively in their current role and to develop to meet future challenges. The Council at its meeting in April, having noted that all Elected Members were supportive of the paper and the general principles contained therein, agreed to continue consideration of the report until this meeting to allow Elected Members the further opportunity to consider the proposals and to review, where appropriate, with the relevant Officers, the terms of the proposed Strategy.
- 3.2 Meetings have taken place with representatives of the three political groups within East Ayrshire Council and the opportunity was taken to clarify certain aspects of the Strategy, particularly in regards to personal development plans and the best mechanism to involve Elected Members in the overseeing of Elected Member Learning and Development within East Ayrshire Council.
- 3.3 The discussions were very positive and following consideration of the input from Members an alternative proposal for the overseeing of Elected Member learning and development within East Ayrshire Council is proposed. Effectively, the Strategy will recognise the important role that the Political Group structure within East Ayrshire Council can bring to support Elected Members in taking responsibility for their continuing personal development. Within an overall strategy that would be approved by Council, Officers will work with the individual Political Groups to progress the Strategy and report back to Council as required. The Strategy document has also been amended to clarify proposals in respect of Elected Member Personal Development Plans.
- 3.4 As previously intimated, role descriptors and associated skills and competencies have been developed for (i) an Elected Member; (ii) Leader of the Council; (iii) Cabinet Member/Portfolio Holder; (iv) Chair of Governance and Scrutiny; (v) Member of Governance and Scrutiny Committee; (vi) Provost; and (vii) Leader of the Main Opposition. On the approval of the overall Strategy, and in line with the revised proposals, these role descriptors and associated skills and competencies information will be circulated to East

Ayrshire Council's political groups for consideration and thereafter learning and development activities will be tailored to the needs of individual Members to enable them to fulfil their respective roles. The development of a skills and competency framework for Elected Members will mirror proposals for Council employees. Following consideration of the role descriptors and associated skills and competencies by the political groups, the role descriptors and associated skills and competency documents will be submitted to Council for approval and will then form part of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy documentation.

4. POLICY/LEGAL/HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS - Nil.

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The introduction of an Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy will ensure that Elected Member learning and development needs are met which in turn will assist Elected Members in promoting/progressing the themes of the Community Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No additional financial implications arising from this report and all proposals will be met from existing current financial resources.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The introduction of an Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy will assist Elected Members to meet the challenges presented in a constantly changing Local Government environment and will ensure that Elected Members receive the required support that they have identified to carry out both their current and future roles.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Council is asked to:-

(i) consider and approve the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy as detailed within the attached document; and

(ii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

9 June 2009
BW/SR

Encs:

1. East Ayrshire Council's Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy.

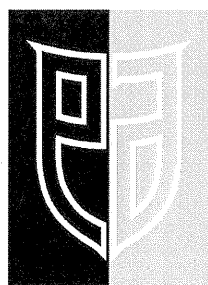
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Tel No (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services.

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

NOTE

Changes to this revised version have been typed in italics and in bold for Members convenience.

DRAFT: V2 - JUNE 2009

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction
2.	Principles
3.	The Aims of the Strategy
4.	Council Commitment
5.	Elected Member Learning and Development Programme: Key Themes
6.	Induction
7.	Learning and Development Needs Analysis
8.	Delivery Techniques
9.	Evaluation
10.	Learning Records
11.	Outcomes and Targets
12.	Officers
	Appendix 1 - Elected Member Learning and Development Action Plan 2009/2010

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 East Ayrshire Council faces significant challenges in a constantly changing Local Government environment. There is a continuing focus on modernising how Local Government operates.

1.2 The Accounts Commission for Scotland recognises that Councils are facing significant challenges which include:-

- implementing single outcome agreements;
- progressing the shared services agenda; and
- changing economic and financial constraints.

1.3 East Ayrshire Council has a pivotal role in terms of being a service provider and also in the governance of local public services. Elected Members are at the heart of this activity and have demanding and complex roles. East Ayrshire Council has 32 Elected Members serving 9 Wards. This Strategy applies to all 32 Elected Members of the Council.

1.4 East Ayrshire Council recognises that Elected Members have a key role taking forward the Council's aims and objectives. The continuous development of Elected Members is an important activity and this Elected Members' Learning and Development Strategy is aimed at promoting learning and development opportunities for Elected Members and ensuring that all Elected Members are engaged with the learning and development process.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 The Council undertakes to adhere to the following principles in relation to Member learning and development:-

- the ***Elected*** Member Learning and Development Strategy will, ***through East Ayrshire Council's Political Group infrastructure, with Officer input***, be led and owned by Members;
- That Elected Members will take responsibility for their continuing personal development as it is acknowledged that Elected Members are key to enabling East Ayrshire Council to achieve its aims and objectives;
- the key themes will be developed with Members and aimed at ensuring that they can fulfil their responsibilities to the local community and provide clear leadership and effective governance and scrutiny of the Council and partnership functions;
- the programme will reflect the local agenda and national issues when relevant;
- Members will be provided with a wide range of learning opportunities and will be encouraged to engage in learning activities to promote continuous development;
- Support will be provided by appropriate Officers to help Elected Members to identify their learning and development needs linked to their roles and responsibilities and the Elected Member ***Skills and Competency Framework***; (***Note: the framework referred to will be based on the skills and competency information referred to under Paragraph 3.4 of the covering report following consideration by political groups and approval of Council***).

- where appropriate, member development will link with officer development and joint activities will be encouraged;
- all learning and development activities will be subject to review and evaluation; and
- a variety of learning methods will be provided and where possible, those with family responsibilities will be provided with suitable support.

3. THE AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

- To ensure that there is appropriate support for every Elected Member and to enable each Elected Member to acquire and develop a full range of skills to maximise their ability and competency in a modern and continually changing Local Government environment; and
- to clearly define Officer responsibility in relation to Elected Member learning and development, including a Lead Officer with a co-ordinating role.

4. COUNCIL COMMITMENT

4.1 East Ayrshire Council is committed to building capacity and the effective leadership and management of the Authority. This means providing effective induction and regularly identifying and supporting the learning and skills development of its Elected Members.

4.2 This commitment is shown by:-

- Corporate recognition of Elected Members learning and development needs;
- A specific annual budget allocation;
- An induction pack;
- A phased induction programme for every newly Elected Member;
- Introduction of regular information about learning and development opportunities (via the Councillors' Information Portal);
- **Officer support to provide for** elected Member evaluation/monitoring of all learning and development activity (**through the Political Groups infrastructure**);
- The introduction of **confidential** Personal Development Plans; and
- Personal Development Plans being monitored and reviewed annually **by the relevant individual elected member with individual officer support.**

5. ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: KEY THEMES

5.1 The key themes for Member development are:-

- Induction;
- Leadership development;
- Community Plan including partnership working;
- Corporate development;
- Code of Conduct including ethics and standards; and
- Community leadership and engagement.

5.2 The learning and development programme for Members will be delivered over a Member's term of office with a combination of activities. The programme will be divided into four main areas:-

- Corporate development; (1)
- Core skills and Competencies; (2)
- Service and role specific issues; (3)
- Individual Personal Development (4).

The Corporate Development Programme will include:-

- Community leadership and partnership working;
- Local Government Finance and financial responsibilities;
- Democracy and governance - how the Council works (decision making);
- Directorate/Service specific;
- Community engagement;
- Code of Conduct, Ethics and Standards;
- The Representative Role;
- Governance and Scrutiny;
- Strategic planning; and
- Risk management and Emergency Planning.
- Managing Ward work.

The core skills and behaviours programme will include:-

- Personal effectiveness and self development;
- The role of Elected Members and corporate parenting;
- Best value;
- Diversity and equality;
- Practical IT skills;
- Managing casework;
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information; and
- Performance management.

Service and role specific development will be delivered:-

- By arrangement based on development needs that have been identified in Personal Development Plan e.g. developing your portfolio role.

Personal development:-

- By arrangement based on development needs that have been identified in Personal Development Plan, e.g. Public speaking.

6. INDUCTION

6.1 The induction process for new Elected Members forms a key element of Elected Members learning and development. In addition to welcoming new Elected Members, the programme will provide basic information on the working of the Council in the form of an induction pack and an induction programme. The induction programme will enable Members to become fully aware of their duties and responsibilities and will develop their role within the Council.

7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The induction programme will also include an initial analysis of individual Elected Members learning and development needs as part of a guided learning and development discussion, during which a **confidential** personal development plan will be agreed. Learning and development activities will be tailored to the needs of individuals to enable them to **further develop** their role as Elected Members. Role descriptors and associated responsibilities are provided for all Elected Member roles. This will enable individuals to specify their needs and to differentiate between learning that is essential to their current role and that which is desirable.
- 7.2 ***It is recognised that individual elected members, will through various experiences, bring with them a diverse range of skills and competencies which will serve them well in the various roles they undertake as an elected member of East Ayrshire Council. The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework within which elected member learning and development can be taken forward in a systematic, effective and informed way. The personal development plan is a tool by which the individual elected member is able to determine what, if any, development activities they would wish to pursue.***
- 7.3 Individual learning and development needs analysis will be carried out on an annual basis. New Members will have the opportunity for a learning and development needs discussion every six months in the first year of office.
- 7.4 Individual development needs will be agreed through the review process by identifying where the Elected Member is currently and what gaps exist within their skills and knowledge that they require to fill to enable them to perform their role. If the Elected Member is unable to participate in an annual review meeting, it will be possible for them to complete a survey to identify their needs and it will be used to create a personal development plan for them by the Head of Democratic Services.
- 7.5 ***Officers will*** review the results of the Personal Development Plans ***and review past activities*** and will develop ***in consultation with political groups a general*** Member Development Programme.
- 7.6 In addition to this, Chief Officers will have an opportunity to influence the programme. Annual discussions will take place between Elected Member Development Support Officers and Chief Officers to determine themes and topics to be scheduled into the Development Programme to ensure that the Elected Member Learning and Development plan contributes to and meets all future Elected Member learning and development needs, which in turn will assist Elected Members in promoting/progressing the themes of the Community Plan.

8. DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

- 8.1 A number of learning methods to fulfil development needs will be utilised in a positive attempt to address differing learning styles and include:-
- External Conferences and Seminars;

- In-house briefings and workshops presented by Senior Managers and specialist Officers; (to include awareness of Council policies and procedures);
- Learning manuals and literature;
- E-learning packages;
- Joint Member and Officer learning;
- Learning with partner organisations and agencies;
- Sharing knowledge and best practice by using the Councillors' Information Portal.

It is recognised that Elected Members have competing interests and enabling Elected Members to find the time to undertake learning and development activities will be a key priority. To do this it is proposed that:-

- ***As far as possible, all*** formal sessions will be programmed in advance to ensure that they do not clash with Meetings cycle;
- Activities, if required, can be programmed at different times of the day to accommodate individual commitments where possible;
- Where appropriate open learning materials and new technology will be used; and
- The Councillors' Information Portal will offer a range of services (course information/feedback opportunity, forums/links to external websites of interest etc).

9. EVALUATION

- 9.1 The Council recognises the importance of gathering information from Elected Members experience of the learning they have received, for evaluation purposes. This feedback will inform future planning or reinforce/confirm the effectiveness of various learning modules or avenues of development.
- 9.2 Elected Members have a crucial role in the evaluation of learning and development. In this way, the effectiveness and value derived from learning events and associated materials can contribute to continuous improvement.
- 9.3 Evaluation forms will be completed at the end of all Elected Members learning events, to assess the benefits to Elected Members and the contributions the learning has made to personal aims and objectives, and confidence building. Comments on the style and effectiveness of the trainer will also assist in future planning. Where events are organised by other organisations, for example Conferences, Elected Members will be expected to discuss the value of the events on their return and share learning materials with others, as appropriate. A corporate feedback form will be provided to assist Elected Members.
- 9.4 A report on the learning and development activities undertaken will be presented to Members annually ***through the political group infrastructure.***

10. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT RECORDS

- 10.1 A centrally administered record of learning activities; attendances and individual development will be maintained and kept up to date by Members' Services (Democratic Services).

11. OUTCOMES AND TARGETS

11.1 The further development of a more structured framework for Elected Member learning and development will provide the opportunity to introduce the undernoted targets which will be assessed from 2010.

<u>NO</u>	<u>OUTCOME</u>	<u>MEASURE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>BY</u>
1	Knowledgeable and confident new Elected Members	% of new Elected Members receiving induction (within six months of start)	100%	(HDS)
2.	Flexible learning opportunities made available in line with need identified in PDP's	% of alternative learning opportunities (timing and/or venue)	75% of learning events	31 March each year (HDS)
3.	Satisfied Elected Members	% of Elected Members who have identified their own learning needs who received that learning within 12 months of identification	100%	Ongoing; monitor annually (HDS)

12. OFFICERS

12.1 The Democratic and Human Resources Services in partnership will support learning and development by:-

- (i) providing the main officer support for all Elected Member learning and development. The Head of Democratic Services will carry out the lead co-ordination role in terms of Elected Member learning and development;
- (ii) devising and delivering in consultation with the **East Ayrshire Council's political groups** programme of induction learning for new Elected Members;
- (iii) devising and delivering in consultation with the **East Ayrshire Council's political groups** a comprehensive learning and development programme for Elected Members based on need identified through personal development planning and other essential learning;
- (iv) providing updated information and delivery if appropriate e.g. any changes to Council policies and procedures; and
- (v) providing administrative support for all learning including communication with Elected Members and provision of feedback to providers.

13. ACTION PLANS

- 13.1 An Action Plan for 2009/2010 is attached for information at **Appendix 1**. The Action Plan will be updated annually in consultation with the ***East Ayrshire Council's political groups***.

March 2009
BW/SR

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2009/2010

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>COMMENCEMENT</u>	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>UNDERTAKEN BY</u>
Present strategy and action plan to Council for approval.	25 June 2009	-	Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support and Head of Democratic Services
Present Strategy together with role descriptions and other related documentation on Elected Member Development to East Ayrshire Council's political groups	First week July 2009	31 August 2009	Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support and Head of Democratic Services
Following sign off of strategic role profiles etc by political groups, submit to Council for approval and adoption		8 October 2009	Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support and Head of Democratic Services
Meantime undertake individual reviews and invite and support Elected Members to create Personal Development Plans	September 2009	31 October 2009	Elected Members' Learning and Development Support Officers
Draft and complete Elected Member Learning and Development Programme in consultation with East Ayrshire Council's political groups	November 2009	Mid December 2009	Elected Members' Learning and Development Support Officers
Review induction package and programme	January 2010	March 2010	Elected Members' Learning and Development Support Officers

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>COMMENCEMENT</u>	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>UNDERTAKEN BY</u>
<i>Consult East Ayrshire Council's political groups on new Elected Member induction package and programme</i>	<i>April 2010</i>	-	<i>Elected Members' Learning and Development Support Officers</i>
<i>Submit to Council for Approval new Elected Members induction package and programme</i>	<i>June 2010</i>		<i>Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support and Head of Democratic Services</i>
Review and revise Elected Member Development Programme as required for 2010/11	<i>June 2010</i>	<i>Mid December 2010</i>	Elected Members' Learning and Development Support Officers <i>in consultation with East Ayrshire's political groups</i>

June 2009
BW/SR