



**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

## Leeds Member Development

A Strategy for the continuous development of elected  
Members of Council in Leeds

2008 to 2011

# Foreword

by the Member Management Committee, Leeds City Council

*“Good political leadership is essential for delivering high quality local government services. The role of the councillor is one of the most complex in politics or the world of work, and never ceases to evolve and develop. Both new and experienced councillors require a high level of support in order to develop the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their roles effectively.*

*As a council, we are fully committed to developing our councillors in order to achieve the Council’s strategic outcomes and improvement priorities. In 2007 we demonstrated this by successfully meeting the stringent standards of the IDeA Charter for Member Development. For 2008-11 we aim to build on our successes by developing yet more challenging and stretching learning programmes in the areas of corporate governance, partnership working, community leadership and scrutiny. As ever, learning and development will be led by Members, for Members. This approach ensures that councillors are placed at the heart of every process connected with their own learning and development.*

*This strategy provides a variety of training methods, recognising that Members have numerous demands on their time and require flexible learning opportunities. The emphasis on personal development planning means that individual needs and preferences will also be addressed.*

*We believe that this strategy will help all Members to reach their potential and thus continue to build leadership capacity at Leeds City Council.”*

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Background context</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview of the strategy</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The strategy in detail</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Learning and development methods</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Developing and monitoring the strategy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Contacts and further information</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>1. Measuring the success of the Strategy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. Role description</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. Analysis of drivers affecting Member Development</b>	<b>20</b>

# Introduction

The role of an elected Member on Leeds City Council is essential to the well being of the city, but it is also very demanding and complex. In order to lead the organisation and city, and continually improve performance, Members require a dedicated learning and development strategy.

This third Member Development Strategy builds on the successes of its predecessors and identifies priorities for 2008-11. It is supplemented by an annual learning and development plan, which details the specific programmes and events which will take place throughout the year. Each year the Member Development programme is reviewed and developed in the light of experience, and to keep pace with internal and external developments.

In 2007 the Council was awarded the Improvement and Development Agency's Charter for Member Development. This award requires Councils to demonstrate commitment in supporting its Members to fulfil their roles and build capacity. The assessors report stated:

*"We were impressed by the enthusiasm and extremely positive comments expressed by the councillors themselves about their development, and equally by the comments of senior officers who alluded to the impact such training had made on individual and corporate performance...the Council has shown a willingness to work together across political boundaries to improve the skills, knowledge and understanding of its councillors."*

This strategy builds on the good practice guidelines outlined in the Charter to ensure continuous improvement, and is also aligned to corporate training strategies in order to provide a co-ordinated approach. In summary, the aims of the strategy are to:

- be fully committed to developing Elected Members in order to achieve the council's strategic outcomes and improvement priorities
- provide a member-led strategic approach to Elected Member development
- have a member learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference development activities will make
- demonstrate that learning and development is effective in building capacity
- address wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship.

These aims will be reviewed and evaluated as part of the annual strategy review. The targets by which the success of the strategy will be measured can be found in Appendix 1.

Whilst this document is primarily a strategy for training and developing Leeds City Council elected Members, opportunities for participation will also be afforded, where appropriate, to Parish and Town Councillors, co-opted Members of the Council's Scrutiny Boards, Standards Committee Members and School Appeals Panel Members.

# Background context

The Leeds Strategic Plan sets out what the Council will deliver on its own and in partnership with other organisations in the city in the period 2008-11. It is informed by the Vision for Leeds, and its strategic outcomes are based around the following aims:

- **Going up a league as a city** - making Leeds an internationally competitive city, the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone.
- **Narrowing the Gap** between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city.
- **Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital**, contributing to the national economy as a competitive European city, supporting and supported by a region that is becoming increasingly prosperous.

The Council Business Plan details what the council will do internally to enable the organisation to achieve the aims of the Leeds Strategic Plan. It outlines the business development, organisational change, process transformation and financial planning activities that staff and Members will be undertaking over the next three years. Councillors clearly have a key part to play in delivering these priorities and their role is pivotal to all of them. Their contribution to the following priority areas is particularly relevant:

- Organisational design and workforce planning
- Leadership
- Democratic engagement
- Equality, diversity and community cohesion
- Information and knowledge management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Service improvement
- Partnerships.

The Council's strategic outcomes will help to inform generic training and development priorities for Members so that they have the capability to meet the challenges that the Council has laid down.

This strategy is also based around the principles of the IDeA Charter for Member Development and is aligned to corporate training strategies in order to provide a co-ordinated approach. Following assessment, an action plan was devised in order to keep the Member Development programme on track for re-assessment in 2010. In summary, the following recommendations were made:

- Develop an innovative and flexible approach to training delivery methods that take into account work-life balance tensions
- Evaluate the role that Members play in the determination of what and how development activity is provided
- Sharing learning within political groups in order to further increase capacity and support succession planning
- Review the budget for Member Development, given that the funding is slightly lower than the regional average, while the number of Members is the highest in the region.

In developing the Member Development Strategy many other factors have been taken into account to ensure that the plan is robust, achievable and flexible, and maintains clear links to the Council's priorities. The Strategy has been informed by in-depth research and consultation, taking into national, regional and local developments. A list of the key factors informing the Strategy can be found at Appendix 3.

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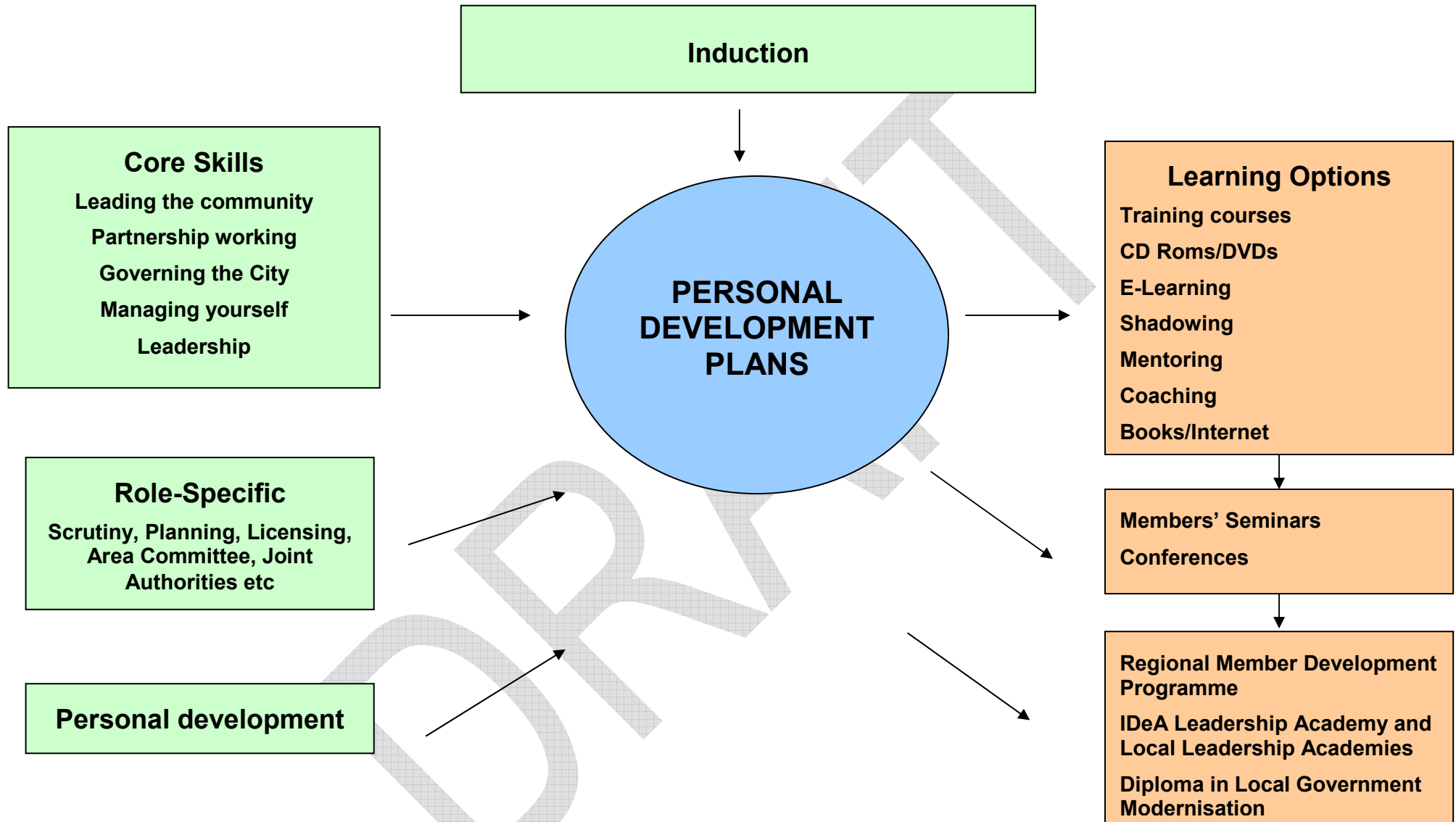
# Overview of the Strategy

A framework diagram, summarising the themes of the Strategy and showing how Member Development will work at Leeds, is shown overleaf.

The framework is based on four learning and development themes:

- An extended **induction programme** for new Members of Council and existing Members requiring a refresher. Although concentrated after the elections, core elements of the induction programme will be repeated throughout the year.
- A set of **core skills** which cover the basic areas of competency for all elected Members.
- A series of **role specific modules**, linked to the competencies necessary to fulfil the various roles on the Council which Members may be expected to undertake.
- **Personal development** through the provision of a comprehensive range of training and development activities linked to a Member's individual needs. These needs are identified by the individual through an annual directed discussion – either with their Deputy Group Whip or the Member Development Officer.

# MEMBER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK





# The strategy in detail

## Induction Programme

It is important that prospective Members of Council understand the Council's commitment to, and arrangements for, training and developing its Members. In order to encourage commitment to the programme, new Members will be given advance notification of the dates planned for training and development activities so that they can plan their diaries accordingly.

Upon election, all new Members will be expected to participate in the induction programme. In order to provide a seamless programme of events, a common structure and format will be adopted and the programme will be co-ordinated centrally. This will ensure that each session has clear objectives, picks up on recurring themes and is fully integrated in the programme.

In cases where a Member is unable to complete one of the modules, arrangements will be offered for a personal briefing. Similarly, if a Member is elected at a by-election part way through the year a series of individual briefings will be offered. Any Members elected at by-elections will also be invited to participate in the following year's full induction programme.

Key induction modules (for example, briefings on the Code of Conduct) will be repeated throughout the year, so that Members have the opportunity to take part in any courses they may have missed. Where appropriate, induction modules will also be made available to existing Members, so that they refresh and update their skills over the course of their political careers.

In addition to this induction programme, which is provided for all Members of Council, the different political groups will make their own arrangements for providing induction and ongoing support, including mentoring if required, to their own Members.

## Core Skills

Members need to demonstrate competence in the following five areas in order to carry out their roles effectively:

### 1. Leading the community

Community leadership is at the heart of the modern councillor's role. Recent emphasis on democratic participation encourages Members to contribute to neighbourhood management and the development of sustainable communities. Areas of focus for the development of this skill include:

- engaging and empowering the community
- community cohesion
- communication and public relations
- councillors as corporate parents.

### 2. Partnership working

There is a greater onus on Members to work closely with partner agencies such as the police, NHS and voluntary sector in order to deliver the requirements of the Leeds Strategic Plan. The success of joint initiatives is dependent on skills such as facilitation, conflict resolution and negotiating. Where appropriate, development of this skill area will involve joint activities with partner agencies.

### **3. Managing yourself**

Councillors must juggle a number of conflicting priorities, and good organisational skills will enable them to cope well with the pressure of their role. Support is available to help them develop in the following areas:

- dealing with casework
- managing time
- using ICT
- managing meetings
- public speaking and presentation
- media and PR.

### **4. Governing the City**

This competency comprises the regulatory and corporate governance responsibilities of all councillors. It includes areas such as managing risk, decision- and policy-making, local government finance and performance management. Members must also take personal responsibility by understanding, and adhering to the Code of Conduct in all areas of their public life, and development in this area is compulsory.

### **5. Leadership**

This skill incorporates interpersonal skills, such as communication and chairing and may be taken to a higher level for those Members who aspire to move into senior roles within their political group. Development options include:

- mentoring
- coaching
- external programmes used to support political leadership development (such as IDeA Leadership Academy).

In addition, political leadership may be addressed in conjunction with the Council's 'top team'. This is likely to comprise joint events with top management that support team building and emphasise transformational leadership.

The core skills will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure that they accurately reflect the changing roles of councillors, and are flexible enough to meet any changes in legislation or governance.

## Role Specific Skills

These are skills related to specific roles on the Council. Members are encouraged to undertake specialist training when appointed to a role in order to ensure that they can discharge their duties effectively.

To support the development of councillors' roles, the Council has produced a generic role description for all Members; this is included at Appendix 2. The role description describes the elements of the role that are common to all Members and, in addition, recognises that individual Members will also be assigned particular functions such as Executive, Scrutiny, Deputy Executive Member or Regulatory responsibilities. These specific roles enable Members to develop expertise in a wide range of policy and service areas, whilst at the same time creating the need for a broad spectrum of high quality training and development support.

The identified roles which this programme supports are:

- Area Committee Chair
- Area Committee Member
- Company Director/Trustee representing the Council
- Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Member
- Deputy Executive Member
- Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Regulatory Panel Member – Licensing\*
- Regulatory Panel Member – Planning\*
- Scrutiny Board Chair
- Scrutiny Board Member
- Standards Committee Member

Members appointed to joint authorities, such as the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, will also be offered learning and development opportunities specific to these roles.

\* Planning and Licensing training is compulsory for any Member appointed to those panels.

## Personal Development

In order to identify individual learning and development needs, all Members are encouraged to undertake an annual review of their learning, performance and achievement. The actual process for achieving this may alter slightly from one political group to another, but will usually involve a focussed discussion between individual Members and their deputy Group Whip. Members are encouraged to use the Member Development Framework (see page 8) to help identify any skills gaps in the core skills areas. During personal development discussions, Members may also wish to consider future aspirations and identify training options to help them attain their goals. For example, a Member who wishes to become an Executive or Deputy Executive Member in the future could identify leadership development as a learning need.

The learning and development needs identified through Personal Development discussions will result in the creation of an individual Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each Member. All PDP data will be collated by the Member Development Officer in order to inform the Annual Learning and Development Plan, as well as being used to meet specific individual needs.

# Learning and development methods

We recognise that each individual has a preferred learning style and where possible we will offer a range of delivery mechanisms. Below are some examples of the learning options available, in addition to training courses.

## Flexible Learning

Alongside traditional courses, we are able to offer other forms of learning such as computer-based courses, access to books/periodicals, directed reading, listening to tapes or CDs, shadowing colleagues, mentoring or being mentored. These options provide a flexible approach for Members whose other commitments make it difficult to attend long courses.

## Lunchtime Seminars

A series of briefing events for all Members will be available throughout the year on corporate and service-related themes. The precise content of these will be developed on a rolling basis by the Member Development Working Group, in order to ensure that, at the time of delivery, they are topical and relevant. These events are available to Members of Leeds City Council, co-opted Members and Parish Councillors.

## External Conferences

In addition to the above programmes, each year the Council is represented by Members at over 50 National Conferences and Seminars. Many of these are annual conferences and are included on an 'approved list'. Others are arranged on an ad hoc basis to cover current issues. Members are usually nominated to attend by their Group Leaders.

Members attending a conference are required to indicate the perceived benefit, to themselves and the Council, by attending. They must also agree to provide written feedback on the key messages from the conference and for this information to be disseminated as appropriate in order to maximise the benefit to the Council of the expenditure.

## Regional Member Development

A regional working group for Member Development in Yorkshire and the Humber (facilitated by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber and the Improvement and Development Agency) meets on a regular basis to share best practice and collaborate on appropriate shared events for Members. Initiatives include: cross-authority mentoring, development of a university course for councillors and joint induction events for new Members.

In addition to working with the regional group, the Council plans to host regional conferences or seminars in the future on issues affecting Members' learning and development. Sharing such events with neighbouring authorities and partner agencies provides economies of scale as well as encouraging networking opportunities and the sharing of good practice.

# Developing and monitoring the strategy

## **Member Development Working Group**

A cross-party Member Development Working Group was established in 2005 and meets on a regular basis. The purpose of the group is to ensure that elected Members are fully engaged in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of Member development programmes. It aims to continuously improve the competency of Leeds City Council elected Members.

## **Member Management Committee**

This Committee has responsibility for overseeing support to elected Members and, in particular, for the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and advising on its continuing development.

## **Standards Committee**

The Standards Committee has a particular responsibility for making arrangements for training in matters relating to codes and protocols and will therefore receive and monitor information relating to the training provided in this regard.

## **Member involvement**

In addition to the formal mechanisms described above, it is important that individual Members have the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of the strategy. Examples of how Members can influence its future direction include; undertaking personal development reviews, evaluating learning events and discussing training and development issues in meetings or with the Member Development Officer.

# Contacts and further information

The first point of contact for Members wishing to discuss learning and development issues is their Group Whip.

For general information with regard to Member Development in Leeds, or to make arrangements to access particular training modules or seminars, please contact:

Kay Sidebottom  
Member Development Officer  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor (West)  
Civic Hall  
Leeds LS1 1UR  
Tel: 0113 39 50852

Further information about Member Development at Leeds can be found on the Council's intranet site. From the home page, click on the 'Member Development' link.

For information about Member Development in general:

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

[www.moderncouncillor.com](http://www.moderncouncillor.com)

# Appendix 1 - Measuring the success of the Strategy

The table below outlines the key areas to be measured and evaluated in order to determine the success of the strategy. The measurement criteria should be monitored and adjusted if necessary when the strategy is formally reviewed.

Aim	Action	Success Measure	Tools for Measuring	Timescale
<b>1. Adopt a Member-led strategic approach to elected Member development</b>	Provide a comprehensive and engaging Induction programme for newly elected Members of Council, which includes compulsory training on the Code of Conduct and for those appointed to regulatory boards	1a. 90% average attendance at all Induction sessions, or one-to-one sessions provided where Members cannot attend	Attendance records	Within 2 months of election
	Carry out personal development reviews with new Members following their induction and offer facilitated annual reviews to all other Members	1b. All new Members discuss personal training needs with their Group Whip or other nominated person	Reports to Member Development Group	Within one month of election
		1c. 75% of Members undertake an annual review of their personal training and development needs	Reports to Member Development Group	July – September each year
	Develop knowledge specifications which outline skills, knowledge and experience requirements for each Member role	1d. Knowledge specifications are in place for each specific councillor role (as outlined in this strategy).  Knowledge specifications are used to determine training needs on appointment to a new role	Council Constitution  Training needs analysis forms returned to MDO	December 2009  Within 1 month of appointment to a new role

Aim	Action	Success Measure	Tools for Measuring	Timescale
	Appropriately learn with external partners through cross authority and shared learning programmes (with bodies such as the health/police/voluntary sector and other community representatives)	1e. Minimum of three joint events take place each year, each achieving an evaluation rating of excellent or good	Event invitations Event evaluations	On-going
	Address political leadership and top team development by working with HR to deliver programmes of training which benefit both Members and officers. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes of events that support team building</li> <li>• Programmes of joint events with top management</li> <li>• Succession development programmes for potential lead position holders</li> <li>• External programmes to support political leadership development (such as the leadership academy or professional qualifications)</li> </ul>	1f. Each event has attendance figure of 80% or above with an evaluation rating of excellent or good. A three-month post event follow-up achieves the same rating	Event invitations Event evaluations	On-going
<b>2. Commit to developing Members in order to achieve the Council's strategic outcomes and improvement priorities</b>	Evaluate the role of Members in determining and learning and development activities eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working Group develops suggestions which are implemented and evaluated</li> <li>- Scrutiny inquiry into Member Development is undertaken</li> </ul>	2a. Minimum of 80% of Member Development initiatives are derived from Working Group recommendations  2b. Scrutiny inquiry into Member Development carried out by December 2009	Minutes of Working Group meetings  Reports to appropriate Scrutiny Board	Ongoing  December 2009
	Learning is effectively disseminated by Members. Feedback and learning points from external learning events and conferences are shared with others.	2c. All Members provide feedback when attending external learning events  2d. All feedback comments are disseminated to others via the Member Development intranet site	Evaluation forms  Intranet site	Ongoing



Aim	Action	Success Measure	Tools for Measuring	Timescale
	All Members are offered role-specific training on appointment to a new role	2e. All Members receive role-specific training within two weeks of appointment to a new role	Attendance records Quarterly training reports	On appointment to the role
3. Have a member learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference development activities will make	<p>Training programmes are available at a range of times allowing access by different groups including those who work</p> <p>Different methods of training are on offer, that respond to individual member needs and learning styles</p>	3a. 75% of training events are repeated in the evening. Where an event is only available in working hours, alternative learning options are available (written materials; e-learning; audio cd etc).	<p>Annual training plan</p> <p>Attendance records</p> <p>Activity reports from e-learning systems (such as ModernCouncillor.com)</p>	Ongoing
4. Demonstrate that learning and development is effective in building capacity	An effective evaluation strategy is in place that analyses costs and benefits from Member training and development and includes case studies of how training and development has impacted on performance	<p>4a. Feedback forms completed for every training event.</p> <p>4b. Three-month follow-up forms are completed for each learning programme (induction; planning training etc)</p> <p>4c. Three case studies per quarter are produced and published on the Intranet.</p>	<p>Reports to Member Management Committee</p> <p>Working Group meeting minutes</p> <p>Post-course evaluation</p> <p>Exit interviews with retiring councillors</p>	December 2008

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Measure</b>	<b>Tools for Measuring</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
5. Address wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship.	Assist those with family responsibilities by providing: - information about the role and responsibilities of elected Members to prospective candidates - Members handbook outlines arrangements that support those with family responsibilities - an Induction event and/or supporting materials for the family of newly elected Members	5a. Candidate pack and handbook available and published on website by end of January 2009  5b. Induction event and/or supporting materials offered in June 2009	Candidate pack on Council web-site  Members Handbook  Event invitations/ documentation	January 2009    June 2009

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## APPENDIX 2 - LEEDS CITY COUNCILLOR – ROLE DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>

**Key tasks for all Councillors** - *all Members of Council will undertake the following:*

- Represent the interests of the Ward for which he/she was elected, and deal with constituents' enquiries and representations, in a manner he/she considers appropriate to the circumstances.
- Fulfil the statutory requirements of any elected Member of Council, as contained within the Members' Code of Conduct, and the local requirements of a Leeds Member as contained within the Council's constitutional arrangements.
- Contribute to Council wide decisions (by participating in meetings of full Council, the remit of which includes deciding the budget and policy framework of the Council, and determining the constitutional arrangements of the Council).
- Contribute to local decisions (by participating in the area committee relating to the Ward for which the Councillor was elected)
- Develop such working knowledge of the Council's services, management arrangements, powers and duties as is necessary in order to perform effectively as a City Councillor.<sup>2</sup>

**Additional tasks** - *with his/her agreement, a Member of Council may be assigned some or all of the following specific tasks*

- Contribute to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Function (by participating as a member of a Scrutiny Board in the scrutiny of the policies, decisions and performance of the Council or of health related services provided to the population of Leeds).
- Contribute to the Council's Regulatory Function (by participating as a member of one of the Council's panels relating to its planning, personnel, licensing and other regulatory activities).
- Contribute to the to the development of high standards of conduct for Councillors (by participating as a member of the Standards Committee)
- Contribute to the recruitment and selection of the Council's most senior officers (by participating as a member of ad hoc Appointments Committees).
- Contribute to the running of partnership bodies and outside bodies (by participating as a member of any such organisations to which he/she has been appointed by the Council).

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<sup>1</sup> All Leeds City Councillors are entitled to the payment a basic allowance in recognition of undertaking a range of tasks. These comprise tasks which are common to all Councillors and a number of additional tasks which will vary from Member to Member. Details of these tasks are contained within this role description. In addition, some Members are allocated roles which carry with them specific additional responsibilities, entitling them to payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance. These are detailed elsewhere within the Council's Members Allowances Scheme.

<sup>2</sup> The Council's Member Development Strategy offers all Councillors the opportunity to participate in a range of training and development activities in support of the tasks contained within this role description; for some specific activities, participation is considered to be an essential requirement.

### Appendix 3 - Analysis of drivers affecting Member Development

The key factors shaping the future of Member development, and therefore the development of this strategy, are summarised in the table below:

<b>Political</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 1997</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive Area Assessment and other inspections</li> <li>▪ Councillors Commission report</li> <li>▪ Region and city region agendas</li> <li>▪ Leeds Strategic Plan / Local Area Agreement / Council Business Plan</li> <li>▪ Place-shaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efficiency improvements and Value for Money</li> <li>▪ Council Improvement Agenda</li> <li>▪ Commissioning, Local Area Agreement and joint budgets</li> <li>▪ Region and city region agendas</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<b>Technological</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work-life balance</li> <li>▪ Community involvement, engagement and participation</li> <li>▪ Equality and diversity</li> <li>▪ Community cohesion</li> <li>▪ Casework</li> <li>▪ Children Act and health</li> <li>▪ Corporate parenting</li> <li>▪ Corporate social responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ICT and possible future changes to councillors' package</li> <li>▪ Remote / mobile working</li> <li>▪ PDAs</li> <li>▪ Vasco tokens</li> <li>▪ Delivery methods for training – CDs, e-learning, pod-casts</li> <li>▪ Members portal</li> <li>▪ Intranet</li> <li>▪ Casework system</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ Ethical framework and ethical audit</li> <li>▪ Governance</li> <li>▪ Regulatory role</li> <li>▪ Changes to the constitution</li> <li>▪ Changes to legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing councillor roles</li> <li>▪ Changing relationships with central government</li> <li>▪ Different political roles eg Executive Board, Scrutiny, Area Committee</li> <li>▪ Sustainability and climate change</li> </ul>