

Member Development Annual Report

2011-12



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Foreword

I am proud to present the 2011-12 Member Development Annual Report. This report illustrates our successes in Member Development over the last municipal year and sets out our plans for the future.

The role of elected Members is constantly evolving. As community leaders, it is vital that we are supported to be as effective as we can possibly be, particularly in a changing world where resources are limited and we must identify creative ways of working. Any learning and development options need to be tailored to suit individual needs – a ‘one size fits all’ approach is impossible with such a diverse group with different needs, experience and aspirations. This year the Member Development Working Group put together a variety of learning programmes which we continually monitored and evaluated over the course of the year. We worked closely with Member Management Committee and Executive Members to ensure that new initiatives were implemented quickly and effectively.

A number of key developments have taken place in 2011-12. The year began with the induction of our newly-elected Members. The activities on offer ranged from formal courses on topics such as Finance, ICT and decision-making to thought-provoking workshops on Managing Casework and Chairing Skills. Each new councillor was offered the opportunity to put together a Personal Development Plan to help them progress as individuals. In addition we offered a new coaching service to support members to set and achieve their personal goals.

The year continued with a number of important briefings on the Government’s reform agenda. Topics included Health, Education and Welfare; further sessions and updates are planned for the coming year.

A number of Members undertook leadership training this year, attending courses such as level 3 of the Institute of Leadership and Management, NVQs in Community Health and an LGA programme for BME councillors. We would like to extend our congratulations to these Members who took the time to attend courses and carry out private study despite pressures of work and family life.

Looking forward to the coming year, despite further cuts to regional funding and support, we will continue to work in partnership with other councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region in order to widen the range of learning and development we offer to Members. Building on the findings of the Commission for the Future of Local Government, consideration will be given to the emerging roles of councillors as facilitators and enablers; binding communities together and working with partners to achieve common goals. We will therefore address learning needs relating to partnership working, the use of social media, facilitation and community leadership and will work with recognised experts in the field to deliver them.

The coming year will be a challenging and exciting one for the Working Group where we will continue to build on our good practice to ensure that we address the needs of all Members of Leeds City Council.

Cllr Kamila Maqsood
Chair of the Member Development Working Group 2011-12

Summary of events and activities 2011-12

This section provides a summary of the events and activities that Members have attended this year.

Induction

- Finding Your Feet – Services and support for new Members
- Introduction to ICT
- Learning the Ropes – the Conduct of Council Meetings
- Speaking in the Chamber
- Knowing your ward
- Understanding the Code of Conduct*
- How the Council Works – Structures and Decision Making
- Roles and responsibilities of Area Committees
- Understanding Overview and Scrutiny
- Meet the Corporate Leadership Team
- Local Government Finance Made Simple
- Managing your Casework
- Community Leadership

Role specific skills

- Introduction to Planning*
- Planning Update*
- Leeds-Bradford Planning Series:
 - Design
 - Green and Blue infrastructure
- Introduction to Licensing*
- Licensing Update*
- Pensions – the Hutton Report
- Equality in decision-making

Personal development

- Being a Corporate Parent
- Safeguarding Adults
- Safeguarding Children
- Charing Skills
- Presentation skills – one to one coaching
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Using the Casework Management system
- BAME Leadership weekender
- Championing Health in the Community (NVQ)
- Institute of Leadership and Management (level 3)

Seminars

- Health is Everyone's Business programme:
 - Health inequality
 - Building relationships with GPs
- Welfare reform
- Rising to the Education Challenge
- Understanding Clusters
- Academies, Trusts and Free Schools
- Safeguarding Adults – meet the Chair of the Safeguarding Board
- Burglary and Community Safety
- Commission on the future of Local Government

External conferences:

- Nuclear Free Local authorities
- CIPFA Advanced Audit Committees
- LGA Annual Conference
- Localism Bill
- National Children and Adult Services Conference
- Localism and Neighbourhood Planning
- Local Government Funding
- Housing Reform
- Decentralised Energy
- Shaping Health and Wellbeing

* compulsory events

Highlights and Achievements

Delivering an effective Induction programme

Nine new Members were elected in 2011, and were offered an extensive programme of learning and development which enabled them to settle into their roles quickly and effectively. As in previous years, the programme included basic events to ensure that Members are equipped with key information to get started, in addition to events tailored to specific roles.

Attendance at Induction events was good, with an average of 6 Members attending each session. Where Members were unable to attend, this was generally due to existing work commitments.

A number of events were shared with other Councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Sharing events in this way brought the following benefits:

- reduction in cost by avoiding duplication
- avoidance of event cancellations due to higher take-up
- opportunity for new Members to network and build relationships outside the authority.

Further collaboration with regional colleagues has taken place over the course of the year.

All induction events were evaluated as 'excellent' or 'good'. Sessions on Corporate Parenting, Speaking in the Chamber and Managing Casework were rated particularly highly; these sessions used a variety of interactive learning methods which proved popular and effective. Main suggestions for improvement concerned:

- The timing of events. A number of new Members would have preferred more events in the early evening.
- Greater participation from existing Members. New Members found events where existing Members were present (either as delegates or providing input) particularly useful, as they were able to learn from the experience of others.

Feedback received from 2011 induction process and the suggestions made for refining and improving the induction programme in terms of timing and content have been integrated into the Induction planning process for the 2012-13 programme.

Improving the exit process

This year four Members (who either stepped down or were not re-elected) took part in the exit follow-up process, either by undertaking an interview or completing a questionnaire.

During the interview process a number of suggestions were made to improve the way that councillors leave the authority, and to recognise and celebrate their achievements during their time in office. These included:

- Ensuring that officers properly understand the election process and treat individuals sensitively when arranging the removal of Council equipment. Also ensuring that they apply a common sense approach to ex-councillors who require a short grace period to tie up loose ends regarding specific pieces of casework
- Signposting members who are not re-elected to areas of support and potential roles for the future
- Finding practical ways to celebrate and evidence achievement, for example, by providing learning records which demonstrate transferable skills, encouraging individuals to create a personal record of their time in office.

As a result of these findings, this year the Member Development Working Group considered a number of practical ways to improve the exit process. The following initiatives were implemented this year:

- Guidance Notes were produced for Members leaving the Council covering topics such as what to do with your ICT files, how to set an Out of Office message and how to get further support
- Certificates are now provided for key learning undertaken (such as Induction)
- A formal learning 'record of achievement' that Members can use during their time in office and take with them after they leave the authority is available to all.

Changes to the exit process will be evaluated as part of the 2012 exit interviews.

Leading on regional projects

This year saw the launch of a new regional website; MORE (Members on-line resource environment). The website contains a range of learning materials for download, audio files, topical articles and briefing notes relating to all aspects of a councillor's role. Next year will see further development including forums, automated newsletters and links to social media. A regional MORE member working group will be established to provide 'quality control' and identify new initiatives; the group will meet in Leeds on a bi-monthly basis.

Leeds were also involved in the development of a new Coaching project. Member Development Officers and Democratic Services Officers across the region received training and gained qualifications in coaching in order to offer this service to members in their own or other authorities. In 2012-13 we will host a regional 'action learning set' aimed at sharing good practice and working further to establish a pool of high-quality coaches for the benefit of Yorkshire and Humber councillors.

Developing a Political Awareness programme

Following discussions at Member Management Committee, we instigated a new learning programme for Council officers aimed at helping them to understand:

- What it means to be politically aware and why political skills are important
- The authority as a political organisation
- Political and decision-making processes at Leeds and their role in them
- The role of elected Members and the day-to-day pressures and challenges they face
- Member-officer relationships and associated codes and protocols

As part of the course, the relevant Executive Member attended for a question and answer session. To date, the main areas of focus have been Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Development with over 100 officers attending. Evaluation from the courses indicates that, as a result:

- Officers feel more confident in their dealings with elected Members
- Officers understand the political and decision-making processes
- Officers are able to empathise with Members and communicate in relevant and timely ways.

The success of the courses to date will be evaluated by the Working Group. Further sessions planned for 2012-13 will form part of the over-arching corporate Member Engagement programme.

Instigating new learning programmes

In addition to the regular learning events programme, this year we instigated three major projects covering health, planning and corporate parenting.

- **Health is Everyone's Business**

As a result of the changes to Health arrangements and the Council's drive to address health inequality, we introduced a new Healthy Leeds programme of events. The aims were to:

- Give Members a better understanding of the health and wellbeing agenda in Leeds;
- Help Members to identify what the key issues for health inequalities are in Leeds, and how to challenge them;
- Help Members to apply their influence on promoting positive health and wellbeing in all arenas they operate in;
- Enable Members to raise the profile of the health and wellbeing agenda across all areas of work.

Two Members also undertook an NVQ; 'Championing Health in your Communities' which consolidated their learning and provided them with some practical tools to take forward.

- **Leeds/Bradford Planning series**

This new programme involved working with Bradford MBC and the social enterprise Integreat Plus to develop a series of regional learning events using quality speakers and experts in the field of planning. The first event covered Design Issues and the second Green and Blue Infrastructure. Members who attended these events are keen to continue the series; as a result #3 is planned for June 2012 on the subject of Heritage and Conservation.

- **Corporate Parenting**

We worked with Leeds Children's Rights to put together a participative session which helped Members to understand how it felt to be a young person in care. The programme, 'Total Respect' was presented by three young women who had a range of experiences of the care system. The sessions were thought-provoking and challenged Members to consider their role in improving the lives of young people. As a result the Members who attended are now involved in visiting residential homes and championing the rights of looked-after-children.

Leadership development

Due to regional funding cuts, we were only able to offer one place on the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course at Northern College this year. However we did receive funding for two places on a new NVQ: Championing Health in the Community.

The ILM course focused on community leadership, transformational leadership, communication skills, accountability and performance management. The course is still on-going but will result in a level 3 qualification which the councillor will be able to use to benefit the organisation and themselves through gaining of a number of transferable skills.

We have also introduced a new Coaching programme which allows Members to work on individual needs and goals with a trained coach from the region. Two councillors used this service in 2011-12, and it is hoped to roll this out further. An action learning set will be established to ensure that good practice and coaching expertise is shared amongst the pool of coaches (Member Development Officers and Democratic Services officers from the Yorkshire and Humber authorities).

Evaluating learning and development

All learning events and programmes were evaluated immediately after delivery and received ratings of either Good or Excellent.

Further evaluation was carried out through the Personal Development Plan process, where Members are asked to comment on how the training they have attended has impacted on their role and the community at large.

Where Members attended an external qualification, a face-to-face discussion with the Member Development Officer took place at the end of the course in order to:

- Ensure that clear benefits were identified
- Identify changes in behaviour and approach
- Devise an action plan so that Members can use their newly acquired skills
- Determine whether the event provided value for money.

Over half of all councillors have attended three or more learning events this year.

Member Development in 2012-13

Reflecting on the year and planning for the future

In this section we reflect on our key action areas from 2011-12 and the progress made in delivering them:

Work more effectively with Executive Members	⇒	The Chair of the MDWG met with Executive members to identify key areas for developing colleagues in issues relating to their portfolio. Any subsequent events were then chaired by the relevant Member.
Encourage officers at CLT level to consider the learning and development impact of key projects on elected Members	→	Running Political Awareness training for officers this year has increased understanding of elected Members and their learning and development needs. The Member Development team were also involved in the State of the City event, capturing key themes from the workshops and organising follow-up activities.
Instigate a programme of Political Awareness training for officers		Approximately 100 officers, primarily in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Development directorates have attended the course. Further sessions will take place in 2012-13. The programme will be evaluated as part of the overarching Member Engagement programme.
Lead on regional projects and provide support for		Many of our events were open to regional colleagues in order to share costs and

other authorities
Offer a coaching service using the regional pool of trained coaches

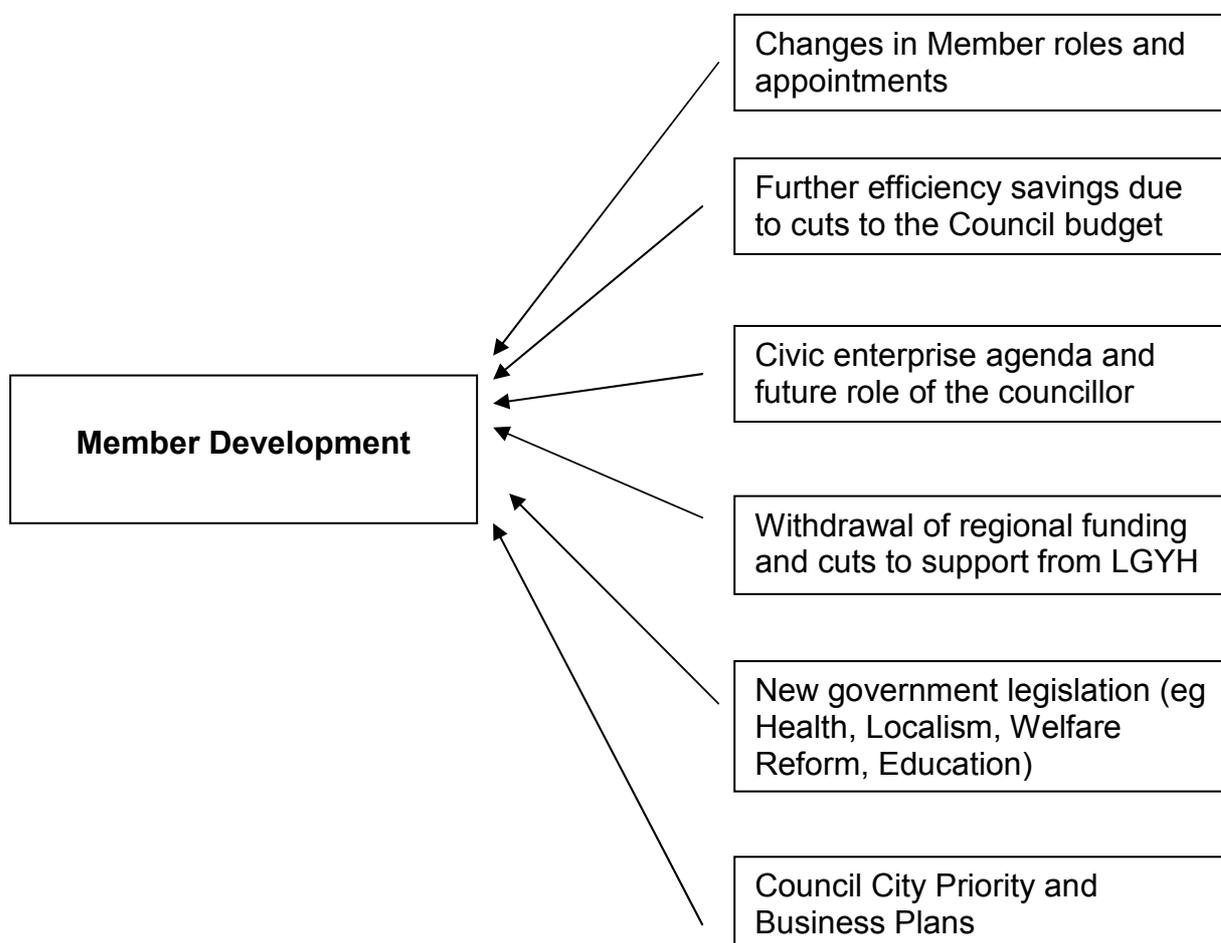


provide networking opportunities. We also led on projects such as MORE (regional website) and the coaching development programme
Two councillors took up the offer of coaching and are keen to continue these meetings.

Developing the Member Development function

It is vital that we continue to be responsive to the changing needs of councillors and adapt our programmes to meet individual requirements. This section summarises our plans for 2012-2013, looking at the key drivers affecting our service and the action areas which will address them.

Key Drivers 2012/13



Key Action Areas 2012-13

Commission for the future of local government

Respond to the final report of the commission regarding the role of councillors and their development needs in the new era of civic enterprise and partnership working. Develop new learning programmes covering skills such as facilitation, social media and community leadership.

Regional working

Lead on key regional projects, such as the Members' web portal, regional Planning programme and Member Development Charter assessment.

Personal Development Planning

Adapt and improve the PDP process in order to appeal to a wider range of Members and address individual needs.

Political Awareness Training

Continue to deliver a regular programme of political awareness training for officers, that contributes to the overarching corporate Member Engagement programme. This programme will be extended to NHS staff transferring to the authority.