

Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor David Henderson, Leader of the Council and Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation	Council	14 November 2019

**Councillor Development Strategy 2019/23
and Councillor Development Programme 2019/23**

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To seek approval of the proposed Councillor Development Strategy for 2019/23 (the Strategy) at Appendix 1.
- 1.2** To seek approval of the proposed Councillor Development Programme for 2019/23 (the Programme) at Appendix 2.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1** Councillors who are equipped with the competencies they need to carry out their various roles as an elected member effectively and confidently.
- 2.2** The council's positive and proactive approach to councillor development will be maintained.
- 2.3** A continuing process to identify on a regular basis the individual and collective development requirements of councillors.
- 2.4** A flexible system which ensures that opportunities for development are made available to fully support and satisfy the needs identified and to provide timely briefings in the event of any changes in legislation or processes.
- 2.5** The council will continue to meet and to exceed the requirements of the Charter for Elected Member Development.
- 2.6** Training and development opportunities will be available for all councillors irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, race, religion, ethnic background or political affiliation.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** That the proposed Strategy be approved and the relevant Director continue to make appropriate arrangements for the provision of development opportunities for all councillors within the agreed budget.
- 3.2** That the proposed Programme be approved and that the four stages of development as set out within the Programme be endorsed as a credible expected “career pattern”.
- 3.3** That the leaders of each political group continue to allocate a suitable number of senior councillors of their group to act as mentors to newly elected councillors as described on pages 10-11 of the Programme.
- 3.4** That the Strengths and Development Record (SDR) 2019 questionnaire (pages 15-20 of the Programme), which replaces the previous Development Needs Analysis be approved.
- 3.5** That, to ensure that development opportunities are relevant and available to all councillors, the political group leaders actively encourage all elected members within their group to participate fully in completion of the Strengths and Development Record questionnaires as outlined on pages 12-20 of the Programme and review their SDR annually.
- 3.6** That responsibility for making appropriate arrangements for ongoing training and development opportunities for councillors using the collated development needs identified through completion of the SDRs remain with the relevant Director.
- 3.7** That the updated Wyre Councillor Skills Framework included as the Appendix to the Programme be noted and endorsed.
- 3.8** That the updated criteria agreed by the Councillor Development Group (CDG) for attendance at external training and other events on page 8 of the Programme be approved.

4. Background

4.1 Adoption of the North West Charter for Elected Member Development

In recognition that training and development was essential to enable councillors to contribute effectively, the council signed up to the principles of the North West Charter for Elected Member Development back in 2000 and we have continued to follow these principles to date.

4.2 Wyre's vision

Wyre has appointed a Councillor Development Officer (CDO), who in consultation with the cross-party CDG, has developed and kept refreshed a Programme specifically tailored for Wyre. The Programme includes:

- **self-assessment questionnaires** to assess councillors' individual and collective training needs - this information is used to prepare development events for councillors for subsequent years.
- **mentoring**, in which the political group leaders allocate a suitable number of senior councillors of their group to act as mentors to newly elected councillors.
- **Wyre Councillor Skills Framework**, setting out the numerous skills that councillors need to carry out all the different roles within the council, including community leadership, scrutiny, communication skills, etc.
- **A four stage development programme**, following the crucial stages of a councillor's "career path" following their initial election.

In the Programme for 2019/23 these stages are:

1. the basics – for the newly elected councillor
2. competence – councillors who have the essential knowledge and skills
3. accomplishment – the experienced councillor
4. grandmaster – the very advanced councillor

4.4 Members' Library

The council has purchased numerous books and open learning materials while others have been donated by councillors and officers. Materials continue to be added to the Members' Library inventory, which is available on request from the Democratic Services team.

Any councillor is welcome to borrow items from the Library providing that they inform a member of the Democratic Services team when they do so.

4.5 E-Learning and distance learning materials

Any councillor e-learning and distance learning opportunities will be kept under review by the CDO and any new options that become available will be brought to the attention of councillors and the CDG.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a series of distance learning materials covering a number of topics, in the form of workbooks and e-learning modules and these are available free of

charge. Both resources are aimed at all councillors and will be particularly useful to new councillors.

The LGA now has a dedicated elearning platform to assist councillors with their development. To receive access to the site for the first time, councillors can simply email elarning@local.gov.uk to receive a user name and password and will then be able to access the site.

The council is also a member of the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU). To receive information briefings and/or the Daily News, local government news email, councillors simply need to register on the LGIU website <https://lgiu.org/membership> and set their preferences.

4.6 Achievements

Wyre was judged to have reached the standards of the Charter for Elected Member Development in 2008 and in 2010 was awarded the Charter Level 2 Exemplar standard for Elected Member Development.

This remains the highest accolade for councillor development and very few councils nationwide have achieved this level.

The 2019-23 updates of the Strategy and Programme will ensure that the council continues to maintain the high standard of councillor development opportunities consistent with Level 2 of the Charter.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** The CDO, in consultation with other council officers, the Cabinet member with responsibility for councillor development (currently the Leader of the Council) and the cross-party CDG will continue to review and monitor the provision of development opportunities to councillors.
- 5.2** The CDO will continue to research and identify best practice and implement any innovations and improvements as appropriate. The CDG will be involved in the ongoing prioritisation of training and development activities and sessions and will agree any changes that might be necessary to the Strategy and Programme for subsequent years in the period covered by the Strategy and Programme.
- 5.3** Any councillor development requirements identified in respect of the issues listed under risks/implications below will continue to be met as appropriate.
- 5.4** The proposals in this report comply with the principles advocated in the Charter for Elected Member Development and will ensure that the council continues to achieve the standards commensurate with the Charter.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	An annual councillor development budget of £6,000 has been allocated. Added to this, £5,020 was slipped from underspends in 2018/19 to increase the 2019/20 training budget for new members in particular. Training and development facilitators will be chosen from a variety of sources as appropriate. This will include in-house training and briefing sessions, cost-sharing with neighbouring authorities as well as external providers. It is intended that all costs will be met from the overall training budget and it is not envisaged that costs will exceed the budget provided. Should essential training be required that incurs any costs over and above the budget allocated, these will have to be met from savings to be identified elsewhere. Any such issues will be fed into the process for the formulation of future budgets.
Legal	The provision of effective training will minimise the risks of illegal or ill-considered decision making.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	✓
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Councillor Development Programme 2019/23

Appendix 2 - Councillor Development Strategy 2019/23

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