

Kent County Council

Strategic Member Development Plan 2018-2022

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Foreword



“In these days of increasing pressures, both fiscal and otherwise, on local authorities it is more important than ever that we have the best trained cohort of Members.

Member Development committees are a vital conduit between Officers, the administration and other Members of the Council to ensure that training being delivered is both timely and appropriate.

Elected Members need to respond to external issues such as changing societal and demographic needs, different ways in which public sector organisations work (i.e. partnerships) and changes in the legislation/law relating to local government.

Ensuring that every Member has the knowledge and skills required to function at a high level as Community Leaders, representing their electorate and undertaking their responsibilities as a Councillor in strategic functions and regulatory roles is a strategic priority.

Kent County Council is widely considered as being one of the strongest member-led councils in the country. Elected Members have a vital role in ensuring that we continue to play our part in increasing opportunities and improving outcomes for the residents, communities and businesses of Kent.

We would, therefore, encourage all Elected Members, even experienced Members, to fully participate in and take advantage of the range of development opportunities that are now available to you.

The **KCC Member Development Strategy** sets out our commitment to Member development, our approach and the learning and development opportunities that are available to you.”



Andrew Bowles, MEMBER
Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group,
Kent County Council

Executive Summary

Kent County Council (KCC) is committed to providing high quality development to Elected Members. The Member Development Strategy ensures that every Member has access to the learning and development they need to effectively fulfil their roles, now and in the future. It is recognised that the role of Member is becoming ever more challenging and this strategy underpins the development available to Members to help them to act reasonably, lawfully and proportionately in their vital role representing residents and supporting communities.

The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) ensures that development is Member-led and is accountable to the Council, supported and advised by Council Officers. Members too have a responsibility to identify their development needs and undertaking relevant training.

A comprehensive review of the Member Development offer has informed our approach to learning content, induction, member development sessions, training delivery, personal development planning and learning administration.

The forward-looking Member Development Plan has been drafted based on internal feedback and external best practice.

A structured approach to measuring the effectiveness of Member development will ensure that our approach and content are fit for purpose and meet Members' needs as well as the needs of the wider Council and the communities they serve.

The South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development provides a robust, structured framework designed to help the authority enhance and hone member development. Kent County Council was first awarded Charter Plus status in September 2011 and the Member Development Strategy will enable accreditation retention.

It is an ambition of the MDSG to build the necessary commitment, funding and support from Members to acquire external accreditation of the Member Development Plan before the County Council elections in 2021.

Background

Kent County Council (KCC) is committed to providing high quality development to Elected Members to enable them to effectively fulfil their roles, now and in the future.

All Elected Members have a responsibility to:

- Develop and maintain their knowledge of the Council's governance, constitution, structure, services, functions and statutory responsibilities
- Develop good working relationships with key Council officers
- Develop and maintain their knowledge of the partner organisations which deliver services to Kent
- Develop and maintain an understanding of the statutory responsibilities on Members personally, as a result of their role in decision making that affects the lives of Kent residents and visitors
- Act appropriately and at all times within the Member Code of Conduct
- Take accountability for their personal development needs and actively engage with and participate in learning and development opportunities
- Encourage the wider community to participate in the democratic process

An effective Member Development Strategy will enhance Members' abilities to meet their responsibilities.

KCC has attained the South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development and is fully committed to the principles of the Charter. The Charter requires that KCC:

- Demonstrates a commitment to Member development
- Has a strategic approach to Member development
- Has a Member learning and development plan in place

Aims

The aims of the Member Development Strategy are to:

- Ensure that every Member has access to the learning and development they need to perform their role and support their electorate
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of Members in relation to personal development
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of Officers in the provision of Member Development
- Secure the resources required to deliver the Member Development Strategy
- Promote the importance of learning and development for Members as key element of a Member-Led authority
- Maintain South East Charter Plus accreditation for Elected Member Development

Our Elected Members have agreed their ambition and strategic statement: **Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes.** Members need to make a range of difficult decisions as the council continues to face the financial and demographic challenges ahead. The key role that Members have in relation to the strategic decision-making during that challenging time means it is vital that they are equipped with the skills and expertise to support them in that role.

Member development plays a vital part in achieving our shared goals. To achieve our aims, we will adhere to the following principles:

- Engage Members in the design of our approach
- Learning objectives will be aligned to the strategic objectives of the organisation
- Development planning will focus on the needs of individuals and build on existing knowledge and skills
- Learning will be designed to be both effective and efficient (make best use of times and resources)

The Member Development Steering Group will be responsible for the development and delivery of the Member Development Strategy, ensuring that Members retain ownership for learning strategy, design and delivery.

Roles and Responsibilities

Member Development Steering Group

Kent County Council is committed to supporting and developing its Members. The Member Development Steering Group ensures that development is member led and is accountable to the Council.

Kent's Member Development Steering Group has been reinvigorated and meets monthly. The Steering Group is comprised of Members and Officers who work closely with all Members to determine their learning needs, encourage the take up of learning and development opportunities and evaluate the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy. The terms of reference for the Member Development Steering Group can be found in Appendix 1.

The Steering Group will:

- Ensure that all Members receive an adequate induction
- Engage with Members individually and collectively to identify their learning needs and priorities
- Receive briefings from the Monitoring Officer regarding relevant statutory and case law developments affecting Members
- Work in partnership with Officers to identify Member learning needs at an organisational level
- Work in partnership with Officers to build the Member Development Strategy, approach and learning content
- Promote the availability of learning and development opportunities
- Encourage member participation and take up of learning and development opportunities
- Promote knowledge sharing amongst Members
- Support the Council's commitment to retain the South East Charter Plus status
- Encourage and build the necessary commitment, funding and Member support to acquire external accreditation of the Member Development Plan ideally before the County Council elections in 2021.

Officer support

Officers from Organisation Development and Democratic Services have responsibility for Member Development. They will:

- Advise and support the Member Development Steering Group
- Lead the review of the Member Development Strategy on an annual basis
- Devise and deliver a comprehensive induction for all Members
- Work in partnership with Members to identify individual learning and development needs
- Research and share insight on development opportunities and best practice
- Co-design and deliver an annual development plan for Members that meets the needs of individuals as well as the Council as a whole
- Support the promotion of available development opportunities
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy
- Lead and support the work to maintain the South East Charter Plus status
- Lead and support the work necessary to acquire external accreditation of the Member Development Plan.

Members

Whilst the Member Development Steering Group and responsible Officers will offer relevant support, encouragement and resources for training and development, all Members have a personal responsibility to develop and maintain the knowledge and skills that are necessary for them to perform their role effectively.

It is incumbent on all Members to ensure that they act in compliance with the Council's Constitution, as agreed and amended by Members from time to time.

The Member Development Offer

A comprehensive review of the Member Development offer has informed our approach to learning content, induction, Member development sessions, training delivery, personal development planning and learning administration.

Learning content

Learning content has been organised into Core content – for all Members to enable them to perform their role effectively – and Elective content, a range of development opportunities designed to support Members, meeting their individual knowledge and skills requirements.

Members elect to undertake the learning and development activities that are most relevant to their role and their personal learning journey:

Core

- Induction programme
- Kent County Council – structure, function, strategic outcomes & partners
- Corporate Parenting
- Information Governance and Data Protection (GDPR)
- The KCC Constitution
- Social Media
- Corporate governance
- Committee governance
- Statutory committee governance
- Legislation
- Strategic commissioning
- Strategic engagement with District Councils
- Community Engagement and Leadership
- Member Support – including IT Support

Elective

- Chair/Leadership skills
- Personal skills
- Overview and scrutiny
- Additional specialist knowledge aligned to individual roles and responsibilities
- Recruitment & Selection

Examples of learning content can be found in Appendix 2. Learning content has been defined following a review of internal requirements and external benchmarking but will be regularly reviewed based on individual and organisational need.

Member Induction

The induction programme is essential for all new Members of the Council and is recommended for refresher training for long term existing members to ensure knowledge and skills remain current. The overall aim is welcome Members and provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to

be able to quickly make an impact, supporting their communities and undertake their roles and responsibilities at an organisational level.

Member Development Sessions

Previously, Kent scheduled weekly Tuesday Directorate briefings which were not always well attended. In future, it is proposed to replace these with less frequent, whole day Member Development Sessions, conference style that enable Elected Members to learn more about key services, policies, activities and outcomes in one programme, optimising members time.

The Member Development Sessions will be interactive, enabling Elected Members to ask questions and develop relationships across the Council, facilitating future Member/Officer collaboration. All materials will be hosted on the Delta Learning Management System to promote ease of access.

Training delivery

A comprehensive review of training delivery has been undertaken to ensure that solutions are effective and fit for purpose. Training will be delivered through a variety of media:

- Face-to-face workshops and seminars delivered by internal and external experts
- E learning programmes
- Recorded Webinars
- Case studies / examples of best practice
- Attendance on External conferences and seminars as identified by members
- Training with districts and partner organisations
- Personal development planning discussions

Training delivery will also focus on making best use of Members' have limited time and capacity and ensuring equality of access. Suggestions for discussion include:

- Asking Members for their input into development scheduling
- Scheduling face-to-face development workshops to align with dates that Members will be coming into the Council for Cabinet Committee and other formal meetings to make attendance easier
- Repeating key sessions via recorded webinar as appropriate
- Offering face-to-face workshops at different days and times of the week to give Members as many opportunities as possible to attend training whilst meeting their other commitments
- Providing copies of materials, notes and presentations
- Making more use of e-Learning to deliver knowledge that does not require discussion or skills development and can be completed at a time that is convenient to individual Members
- Exploring why there hasn't been more take-up of e-Learning and addressing the resulting needs

Personal development plans

The Member Development Steering Group will consider learning needs from an organisational perspective however, Members will also be encouraged to complete an individual personal development plan – see Appendix 3

Personal development planning is designed to help Members develop the knowledge and skills they require for their current role as well as supporting their future aspirations.

The personal development plan captures learning objectives, strengths, development areas, learning plans and outcomes. The personal development plan encourages individual reflection and prioritises learning needs. All Members will be offered a confidential, individual meeting to discuss their plan.

Individual development needs will be anonymised, collated and shared with the Member Development Steering Group. The Member Development Plan will therefore be informed by the needs of individual Members as well as organisational needs.

Learning administration

All learning content will be hosted on Kent's Delta Learning Management System, making it easy for Members to access learning content at point of need. All learning administration – course booking, evaluation and management reporting – will also be managed through Delta.

We have also agreed the introduction of more formal protocols and processes to manage course bookings in line with the broader Council. Agreeing a minimum number of attendees for courses to be viable, and the ability to monitor course booking rates enables events to be promoted further and/or run-cancel decisions to be taken earlier, reducing waste. Full monitoring and evaluation data will be fed back to the Member Development Steering Group in order they have an informed view of development being accessed and its perceived value to members.

Member Development Programme

In 2018, the following activities have already taken place/are scheduled to take place:

- Induction
- GDPR training
- Social media for members at two levels
- Corporate parenting
- EODD Briefing Day
- Individual Member attendance at Conferences
- Individual Member attendance at a range of development programmes to support individual knowledge requirements

The forward-looking Member Development Plan can be found in Appendix 4.

Evaluation

It is important that we adopt a structured approach to measuring the effectiveness of Member development to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets Members' needs.

Measurement sources will include:

- **Participation levels** – Are Members attending events and making use of learning content?
- **Member feedback** – Are learning and development interventions effective in meeting the stated learning outcomes? Are Members confident that they can put the knowledge and skills they have developed into practice?
- **Observation** – Are Members demonstrating the knowledge and skills identified in the agreed learning outcomes?
- **Impact against outcomes** – Is the development meeting the learning outcomes, are they proving effective in building identified skills and knowledge development?

The Member Development Steering Group will review evaluation data on a regular basis and take action as required. Evaluation data will also be used to inform regular reviews and updates of the Member Development Strategy.

South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development

Making the most of member development

Any council that is serious about meeting the needs of its community must be committed to developing its councillors. Most authorities have some form of support programme in place. However, the approach and levels of commitment and effectiveness vary.

The South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development provides a robust, structured framework designed to help the authority enhance and hone member development.

The charter is available for councils, police and fire authorities across London, Northern Ireland and the south-east and east regions of England. In the south-east, 18 councils have achieved the Charter status to date.

Kent County Council Chartered Status

Kent County Council made a commitment to the South East Charter for Member Development in September 2007. The Council was granted the Charter in September 2010 and subsequently awarded Charter Plus status in September 2011. The Council has subsequently been successfully re-assessed for Charter Plus in 2014 and 2017.

Process

There are 5 key stages towards obtaining and retaining chartered status:

- **Stage 1: Commitment to the Charter and an action plan.** The authority will undertake a self-assessment against the Charter criteria and, based on the self-assessment, will develop an action plan supported and approved by the accreditor.
- **Stage 2: Improving the development of councillors.** The authority works towards achieving the Charter and meeting the requirements of the action plan.
- **Stage 3: Assessment.** When an authority considers it has everything in place to demonstrate it has achieved the Charter, they will inform the accreditor who will make a judgement whether the authority is ready for assessment. An on-site assessment will be carried out by a trained team. A comprehensive report will then be sent to the authority following the assessment visit, outlining good practice, areas for improvement and whether it has achieved Charter status.
- **Stage 4: Awarding the Charter.** When the authority has been assessed and awarded Charter status, a certificate will be presented.
- **Stage 5: Reassessment.** Once awarded, the Charter has a 'lifespan' of three years, after which an authority will be required to submit details of how it has sustained the standard. The authority is then reassessed against the Charter. An informal review after 18 months is also carried out to check progress and identify any needs.

NB With KCC having retained its Charter Plus status in November 2017 we can expect an informal review around March/April 2019

Contact Details

For further information on Member Development, please contact **Janet Hawkes**, OD Strategy & Commissioning Manager, Organisation Development Team, HR/OD Engagement, Organisation Design & Development

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Appendix 1 - Member Development Steering Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Member Development Steering Group will oversee all Member Development at Kent County Council.

Membership

The Member Development Steering Group will include a cross section of Members as well as Council Officers from Democratic Services and Organisation Development.

The Members

- Mr Andrew Bowles MEM - Chair
- Mr Eric Hotson MEM
- Mr Gary Cooke MEM
- Mrs Ann Allen MEM
- Miss Emma Dawson MEM
- Mr Dara Farrell MEM
- Mrs Shellina Prendergast MEM
- Mrs Paulina Stockwell MEM
- Mr Rob Bird MEM
- Mr Martin Whybrow MEM
- Mr James McInroy MEM

Officers

- Janet Hawkes – OD Strategy & Commissioning Manager
- Ben Watts – General Counsel and Monitoring Officer

Additional Officers will be engaged and asked to attend as necessary

Meeting Frequency

The Steering Group will meet on a monthly basis

Terms of Reference

- To develop and manage Kent County Council's Member Development Strategy
- To identify the development needs of Members – at an individual and Council level
- To develop, manage and evaluate the effectiveness of the Member Development Plan
- To provide direction and guidance on all Member development issues and opportunities
- To communicate and promote Member development opportunities
- To encourage Member engagement and participation in training and development
- To lead the retention of Kent County Council's South East Charter Plus for Member Development accreditation

Appendix 2 – Recommended Learning Content

Core	
Induction	Statutory Committee specific induction
Role of the council	Information security, governance and GDPR
Overview of key services	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Role of an elected member	Code of conduct
Member expenses and allowances	Equality
Financial policy, budget and treasury management	Antifraud and corruption
Procedural rules – debate, motions, tabling questions and decision making	Lone working
Media/social media policy	IT kit training
Social Media Training	Interactive workshop
Economic development & renewal	Corporate parenting
Procurement & contract management	Planning
Safeguarding	Strategic commissioning
Community engagement and leadership	Partnership working
Decisions for future generations	Spotlight on Directorates
Transformation and change	Getting the best from social media
Elective	
Chairing skills	Public speaking
Personal presence and impact	Effective writing
Influencing skills	Interpreting reports
Personal resilience and stress management	Digital awareness
Personal effectiveness and time management	Political awareness
Critical thinking and analysis	Scrutiny and challenge
Media training	Leadership skills
Recruitment and Selection	

Appendix 3 – Personal Development Plan

Name:	
Role:	
Additional Committee Membership/s:	<p><i>Are you a member of a committee/s with statutory training requirements?</i></p>
Plan Date:	
Strengths:	<p><i>What knowledge/skills do you have to share?</i></p>
Development needs:	<p><i>What knowledge/skills do you wish to develop? What outcomes would you like from this development?</i></p>
Learning Objectives:	<p><i>How will you develop your knowledge/skills? Consider informal learning opportunities (mentoring, practice, shadowing) as well as formal (training courses, eLearning, workshops, seminars, webinars, books, guidelines)</i></p>

Learning Outcomes:	<i>What have you learned? How have you put your learning into practice?</i> <i>What value does it add?</i>
Plan Review Date:	

Appendix 4 – Member Development Plan

Learning Method Key:

Workshop/Seminar



eLearning



Book/Guide/Article





















Coaching/Mentoring






















All learning content and workshop bookings can be accessed through Delta.

Date	Participants	Title	Description	Learning Method
Month 1	Core – All	Role of the council	Learn about KCC's strategy, values and strategic outcomes	
Month 1	Core – All	Overview of key services 1	Learn about the key services that KCC provides to Kent's residents, communities and businesses	
Month 1	Core – All	Role of an elected member	Learn about the key roles and responsibilities of an elected member	
Month 1	Core – All	Procedural rules – debate, motions, tabling questions and decision making 1	Learn the procedures by which issues are raised, debated and decisions are made	
Month 1	Core – All	Member expenses & allowances	Learn about allowable expenses and how to claim them	
Month 1	Core – All	Financial policy, budget and treasury management	Learn about KCC's approach to financial policy and budget and treasury management.	

Month 1	Core – All	Media/social media policy	KCC recognises and embraces all forms of media including social media. This eLearning module provides guidance on how to use media safely and effectively.	
	Core - All	Social Media	Classroom workshops, delivered at two levels, to build skills, knowledge and expertise in getting the best from social media platforms	
Month 1	Core – All	IT kit induction	Receive 1:1 coaching on how to use you the IT kit that you are provided with	
Month 1	Core – All	Information security, governance and GDPR	This eLearning module ensures that you are aware of your responsibilities in relation to information security, information governance and processing personal data	
Month 1	Core – All	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	This eLearning module ensures that you are aware of your responsibilities in relation to health, safety and wellbeing as well as providing details of the support that is available to you	
Month 1	Core – All	Code of conduct	Member handbook – familiarise yourself with KCC’s code of conduct and expectations of behaviour	
Month 1	Core – All	Equality	This eLearning module ensures that you are aware of your responsibilities in relation to equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion	
Month 1	Core – All	Antifraud and corruption	This eLearning module ensures that you are aware of your responsibilities regarding antifraud and corruption as well as how to raise any concerns	
Month 1	Core – All	Lone working	Learn how to work safely when working alone, for example when conducting constituent surgeries	
Month 1	Core - All	Procedural rules – debate, motions, tabling questions and decision making 2	Newly elected members are given the opportunity to learn how to navigate procedural by pairing them up with experienced members and/or committee secretariat	
Month 1	Core – All	Overview of key services 2	An opportunity to meet with representatives from our key services and learn more about their priorities and the issues that they face – format to be discussed and agreed	

Date of 1 st Meeting	Core – Health & Safety Committee Members	Health & Safety Committee Induction	Learn about the statutory responsibilities and procedures relating to the health and safety committee from the committee chair/secretariat	
Date of 1 st Meeting	Core – Treasury Committee Members	Treasury Committee Induction	Learn about the statutory responsibilities and procedures relating to treasury committee from the committee chair/secretariat	
Date of 1 st Meeting	Core – Planning Committee Members	Planning Committee Induction	Learn about the statutory responsibilities and procedures relating to the planning committee from the committee chair/secretariat	
Date of 1 st Meeting	Core – Pension Committee Members	Pension Committee Induction	Learn about the statutory responsibilities and procedures relating to the pension committee from the committee chair/secretariat	
Month 1	Elective – Personal Skills	Chairing skills	For Chairs new to role or seeking to develop their skills. This interactive workshop will enable participants to learn about how to chair meetings effectively including encouraging contribution, managing time, making and recording decisions and managing conflict	
Month 1	Elective - Context	Safeguarding	Learn more about KCC's approach to safe guarding and your responsibility as members	
Month 1	Elective – Personal Skills	Scrutiny and challenge	How to use your political skills and understanding of the needs of local people to challenge and shape policy	
Month 2	Elective - Context	Corporate Parenting	Learn more about KCC's approach to corporate parenting and your responsibility as members	
Month 2	Elective - Context	Recruitment & Selection	Delivery of our policy standard that recruitment panels, including Member panels, must include people trained in our recruitment and selection process	

Month 3	Elective – Personal Skills	Personal presence and impact	Learn the ingredients of personal presence and practice skills to improve personal impact	
Month 3	Elective - Context	Economic development & renewal	Learn more about KCC's approach to economic development and renewal, strategy, key projects, issues, opportunities and outcomes	
Month 4	Elective - Context	Procurement & contract management	Learn about KCC's approach to procurement and contract management, key contracts, issues, opportunities and outcomes	
Month 4	Elective – Personal Skills	Influencing skills	Learn about different influencing styles, when and how to use them to be a persuasive communicator	
Month 5	Elective - Context	Local leadership	Learn more about local leadership – what it is, why it's important in Kent, issues, opportunities and outcomes	
Month 5	Elective – Personal Skills	Social Media training	An interactive workshop designed to develop skills to handle media questions, develop key messages and manage the media effectively	
Month 6	Elective - Context	Decisions for future generations	Learn about the Welfare for Future Generations Act and how to apply the framework to decision making	
Month 6	Elective – Personal Skills	Public speaking	An interactive workshop designed to teach the core components of public speaking – content design and delivery - and provide participants with the opportunity to practice speaking with impact	
Month 7	Elective - Context	Planning	Learn more about KCC's planning policies, development strategy, key projects, issues, opportunities and outcomes	
Month 7	Elective – Personal Skills	Digital awareness	Learn more about how digital technology is transforming our services and opportunities for our residents, communities and businesses	
Month 8	Elective - Context	Commissioning	Learn about how KCC commissions products and services	

Month 9	Elective - Context	Partnership working	Learn more about partnership working – what it is, why it’s important in Kent, key partnerships, issues, opportunities and outcomes	
Quarterly	Elective - Context	Spotlight on Directorates	Regular workshops to enable Elected Members to learn more about KCC’s Directorates - their priorities, issues, opportunities, outcomes – and develop relationships for future collaboration	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Personal resilience and stress management	Learn how to remain personally resilient and recognise and manage stress	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Personal effectiveness and time management	Learn strategies to prioritise work, delegate, manage time and work effectively	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Critical thinking and analysis	Learn tools and techniques to analyse and interpret information in order to make sound judgements	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Effective writing	Learn the secrets of writing content that is impactful and concise	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Interpreting reports	Learn tools and techniques to analyse and interpret reports	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Political awareness	Learn about the political landscape that impacts and is impacted by KCC	
On demand	Elective – Personal Skills	Digital awareness 2	Access a range of IT training online to develop your IT knowledge and skills	