

Scoping Report for Member Development Strategy Task and Finish Group

Review Topic	Member Development Strategy
Scoping Report to go to meeting on	26 September 2024
Review to take place at meeting on	25 March 2025
Lead Officer	Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager

<p>Terms of Reference (to include the scope of the Review)</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p>To produce a Member Development Strategy tailored to the needs of Uttlesford District Council.</p> <p>The Member Development Strategy will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the purpose and importance of councillor development and ensure buy-in from all levels of councillors and officers • promote a positive and inclusive culture of learning, development and continual improvement • ensure the needs of councillors are understood • provide high quality training and learning through needs assessment, reviews and evaluations • provide an engaging programme of learning and development to ensure councillors can be effective and confident in their role • strengthen councillor-officer relationships • enhance democracy, participation and councillor diversity • celebrate achievements and impact. <p>Status</p> <p>This is a Task and Finish Group of the Audit and Standards Committee, established to produce a Member Development Strategy to be recommended to the Committee in March 2025.</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>Four members to be appointed on a cross party</p>
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	<p>basis. Although this a Task and Finish Group of the Audit and Standards Committee, due to the apolitical nature of Member Development, it is recommended that the Chair consults each Group Leader of the four political groups represented on the Council to invite them to a member which can, but does not have to, be drawn from the membership of the Audit and Standards Committee.</p> <p>Attendance Officers will attend T&F Group, primarily the Democratic Services Manager. The Group may invite other parties to attend and to contribute to meetings as it decides.</p> <p>Meetings The T&F Group will fix its own timetable for meetings as necessary, in order to produce a recommendation to the Audit and Standards Committee at its meeting in March 2025.</p> <p>Officer support Democratic Services will provide administrative support for the Group.</p>
<p>Purpose of the Review (what the review should achieve)</p>	<p>Purpose: To produce a draft Member Development Strategy tailored to the needs of the Council and make a recommendation to the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 March 2024. If the Committee are minded to do so, the Strategy will be recommended to full Council for adoption at the annual meeting on 20 May 2025.</p> <p>Aims and purpose of the strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and vision of the council and the integral role councillors play in achieving these. • Importance of councillor development and continual improvement. • Inclusion of senior buy-in, for example, council leader and group leaders, and chief executive write and sign the introduction, are quoted on the importance of councillor learning and development, or share the impact of their own learning experiences. • Important context such as recent

elections, challenges facing wider local government, or the latest milestones achieved for the councillor development strategy.

- Priority development needs and how these link to council objectives, as well as horizon-scanning and anticipating future needs.
- Accessibility underpinning the strategy – ensuring equal access (for example, reasonable adjustments, timings of training sessions, and different learning styles) and support for councillors at every stage of their journey and tenure.
- Signposting to all relevant strategies, policies, plans and programmes – can be appended in a pack or linked to electronically.

Mechanisms to drive, review and deliver councillor development

- Set out who is involved in councillor development, for example, a cross-party councillor development group, councillor task and finish groups, champions – and signpost to the remits and roles of each.
- Detail how needs are identified and reviewed (for example, training needs analysis, personal development plans (PDPs), and learning styles analysis), decision-making processes related to councillor development, and methods of evaluation.
- Set out importance and process of PDPs.
- Outline how training needs are met through the elements of the learning and development offer.
- Risk management process, and the flexibility and resilience to adapt the offer in response to challenging times or disruption to business as usual.
- Importance of sharing learning between councillors and officers at the council, and with other local partners on a place-based approach.

The councillor development offer and programme

- Set out the full learning and development support package available for councillors.
- Note that there is support for councillors

	<p>at every stage of their journey and tenure – starting before people become a councillor by proactively promoting the role and democratic participation with the Be a Councillor campaign, right through to being a senior member of the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the programme of mandatory and non-mandatory training, seminars and briefings; induction programme; personal needs discussions for reasonable adjustments; personal development plans; courses run by the council, regionally or external providers such as the LGA; mentoring and coaching; one on one support available from specific officers such as councillor services or directors. • Include the other resources available, for example on the council intranet (for example, councillor role profiles); video tutorials (for example, IT or casework); e-learning; service area specific resources; wellbeing and personal safety support. • Signpost to the induction package. • Checking in with new councillors four to six months after election to ensure needs have been met and set up PDPs.
<p>Methodology / Approach (methods to be used to gather evidence)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice guidance as produced by the LGA, e.g. “Councillor development checklist”. • Member consultation – to survey, interview and consult councillors to ascertain needs and views. • Meetings to be noted and action lists produced. • Review of training provided to members since their election in 2023. • Review of member survey responses on said training. • Consideration of ‘best practice’ Member Development Strategies; compare and contrast exercises. • The T&F Group to request evidence as required.

Written Evidence Required	A formal report will be produced for the consideration of the Audit and Standards Committee, providing evidence for the draft Member Development Strategy. The Strategy will ultimately be approved by Full Council.
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