

SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Sedgemoor District Council is committed to learning and development for its councillors. It recognises the contribution that such investment can make in supporting elected members in their various roles and, as with its staff, it is committed to realising the potential of councillors to contribute fully to the success of the organisation.

It is this Council's policy to adopt a planned approach to Councillors Development and to actively involve elected members in setting the priorities for learning and development each year and in reviewing the operation and outcomes of the Learning & Development Programme.

The Programme aims to achieve the following overall outcomes:

1	To assist councillors to deal with the challenges of being an elected member and an effective ward councillor.
2	To enable councillors to perform their roles in improving how services are delivered, monitoring how resources are allocated and ensuring correct processes are observed.
3	To help councillors to fulfill their community leadership role to effect improved partnership working and community cohesion.
4	To assist councillors to achieve effective and balanced decision-making.
5	To provide opportunities for councillors to keep up to date with best practice and legislative changes.

To do this, we will:

1	Establish a Councillor Development consultative group comprising representatives from each political group.
2	Encourage councillors to complete a skills audit and agree a Councillor Action Plan (CAP) each year to identify individual learning and development requirements.
3	Produce an annual Learning and Development programme, drawing on the skills audit CAPs, in consultation with and championed by the Councillor Development group.
5	Offer councillors the opportunity to attend staff training sessions.
6	Work towards achieving South West Charter for Member Development

7	Assess and where appropriate implement alternative methods of learning and development, such as mentoring, job shadowing, on-line distance learning. Arrange joint training sessions with other partners and local authorities.
8	Provide an induction programme for newly elected councillors from May 2007.

Success to be measured by:

1	Evaluation sheets completed by members at the end of each session or activity.
2	Results of annual learning & development questionnaire
3	External verification (eg South West Charter for Member Development)

Milestones:

1	Councillor Action Plans, including skills audits, to be completed by July 2007.
2	By April 2008, all councillors to have attended/taken part in at least 2 learning & development activities.
3	All new councillors to have received induction training by July 2007.

Processes

1. Democratic Services will notify all councillors of forthcoming Learning & Development Programme events and will deal with all applications for these sessions.
2. Councillors will be notified electronically of staff training sessions and any elected members wishing to participate in these should apply direct to the Employee Development Officer. Priority on these sessions will be given to employees but councillors will be welcome to attend if there is sufficient availability. If there appears to be a high demand for specific sessions, Democratic Services will arrange a separate session for councillors.
3. Requests for places on external training sessions must be made via Democratic Services, who will make the necessary bookings and payments. Please note that, due to budgetary constraints, it may not be possible to approve all requests.
4. Councillors will be kept informed of learning and development resources and opportunities via the Members Bulletin.
5. Any expenses incurred in connection with learning and development events should be included on the normal Members' Allowance claim forms, with receipts where appropriate. Rail travel can be arranged by Democratic Services.