

# ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2022 – 2027



## **Introduction**

The role of a Councillor is both exciting and highly rewarding. With the increasing challenges that local authorities face in delivering services effectively, and within budget, however, Councillors do require skills and knowledge in a diverse range of topics and roles. The communities that a Councillor represents, also develop and change over time. A councillor is expected to carry out many roles ranging from community leader to taking on roles and responsibilities both within the Council and on outside bodies. A councillor requires to balance the needs and interests of their community, their political party or group if they are associated with a party/group, and the council as a whole as well as, of course, their personal, family and any employment commitments. This is not an easy task.

The Council is committed to the development of its elected members and has produced this strategy to assist in equipping all elected members with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet future challenges.

## **Expectations of the Elected Member Development Strategy**

Elected members are an Integral part of ensuring that the strategic aims and objectives of the Council are met when carrying out their duties both in terms of making decisions and delivering better outcomes for the citizens of Angus.

## **Access to development opportunities**

All elected members regardless of length of service, party membership or post held within the council will be given access to the same training and development opportunities, be that as a collective group of members through workshops and information sessions or an individually tailored development programme through the use of the Political Skills Assessment. It is however recognised that not all elected members may be able to access these training opportunities in the same way due to work/family/personal circumstances. Officers will look to provide training opportunities where appropriate, outwith working hours and also look to record training sessions to allow elected members to access these resources at a time and place that is best for them. The Assessment has been developed to support members to consider how they take up and carry out different roles and responsibilities. Its purpose assessment is to help members reflect on changes they want to make to better serve their constituents. It is developed by the Improvement Service.

## **There is a clear structured approach to elected member development through an ongoing programming of events and activities to support the development.**

All members understand the development opportunities available to them upon election and throughout their term of office and how the Council can support them in their role.

Elected members have access to appropriate learning and development activities to enable them to acquire the skills and knowledge required to carry out their role effectively.

To ensure members get the most from the development opportunities, the Council will provide effective and appropriate training resources as well as monitored and evaluated training.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Director of Legal & Democratic Services**

It is the role of the Director of Legal & Democratic Services to arrange for there to be put in place the Elected Members Development Programme. This will include: -

- the collation of the learning and development needs of elected members which will inform the annual training programme and ongoing member development, and
- the production and monitoring of the Programme,

### **Democratic Services and Executive Support**

Democratic Services and Executive Support have produced the elected members induction programme for 2022 which will be kept under review to ensure that it is fit for purpose as well as carry out an evaluation of the Programme.

Executive Support (Members Services) will record all members' training and development activities during their term of office. The Council is required to publish annually the number of hours training each member has undertaken.

### **Political Leaders**

Political group leaders should encourage all members from within their group to participate in the learning and development programme and actively support its members in doing so.

### **Directors and Services**

All services within the Council are responsible for identifying and delivering service specific training to elected members. This can be delivered in many forms and examples of services informing members include:

- Formal group training for all members
- Delivering ad hoc topic specific workshops and seminars to elected members
- Attending committees to inform members about specific services/topics
- Circulating newsletters/factsheets to members and providing regular updates to them.

### **Elected Members**

Elected members are responsible for:

- Identifying their own development needs in conjunction with Organisational Development
- Seeking opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their skills and knowledge
- Attending arranged learning and development opportunities
- Participating in the Political Skills Assessment
- Sharing their knowledge and skills with their peers

- Reviewing their learning and development activities

## **The Improvement Service (IS)**

The Improvement Service (IS) is the 'go-to' organisation for local government in Scotland. Established in 2005 as the national improvement organisation for Local Government in Scotland, set up to deliver improvement support that help council's provide effective community leadership, strong local governance and deliver high quality effective local services.

The IS work with council's and other partners to provide high quality and cost-effective training and development opportunities for elected members.

They provide a non-partisan role in supporting all elected members in Scotland.

Further information can be found at <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/what-we-do/support-for-elected-members>

The elected member briefing series has been developed by the IS to help elected members keep a pace with key issues affecting local government.

## **What Officers will do to support Elected members?**

### **Pre-election process**

#### Candidate Briefing Session

Prior to the ordinary election of councillors, a briefing session will be held for all potential candidates. The sessions will cover the essential processes rules and procedures in terms of the election as well as an overview from the Chief Executive and Director of Legal and Democratic Services on the expectations and commitment needed to be a Councillor. Details of the draft Induction programme and any other relevant information will be available for attendees.

### **Post-Election process**

#### Induction Programme

Prior to the ordinary election of councillors, an induction programme will be drafted for all members to participate in following the election. The induction programme will cover both mandatory and non-mandatory training in terms of a Councillor's role as well as offer information sharing sessions.

The induction programme will normally include the following:

### **Chief Executive welcome**

The initial session of the induction programme will commence with an induction from the Chief Executive and the Council Management Team and will provide members with a brief introduction to the Council and a "who's who". The sessions will inform elected members of

the Council's objectives and values and will offer an opportunity to meet Chief Officers and Service Managers and gain an understanding of the wide-ranging services the Council provides.

## **Training Sessions**

In addition to the Chief Executive welcome, the induction sessions include topics such as:

The Councillors' Code of Conduct

This explains the ethical framework within which members are required to operate, the rules they require to follow and the behaviours expected of them.

Corporate Parenting

This session covers the legislative framework and legal expectations of elected members in their safeguarding and corporate parenting duties. Members will receive information on the Council's policy and steps the authority is taking to help looked after children.

Committee Specific Training

Whilst almost all induction sessions are open to all members, the Liquor Licensing training for membership of the Licensing Board is the only one which is mandatory. Members involved in decision-making on the under-noted Committees and Sub-Committees are strongly advised to attend the relevant training.

- Development Standards
- Scrutiny & Audit
- Licensing Committee
- Appointment of Senior Officers Sub-Committee
- Education Appeals Committee

Recruitment and Selection training should be undertaken prior to any participation in the recruitment and selection of officer positions on behalf of the Council.

## **The Standards Commission**

Members should also be aware of the Standards Commission's Policy on the Application of Sanctions and that ignoring advice and/or training opportunities that could have prevented a contravention of the Code may be considered an aggravating factor by the Standards Commission when deciding on the appropriate sanction to be applied, following a breach finding.

<https://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/cases/hearing-rules>

## **Evaluation of Induction Programme**

The effectiveness of the induction programme will be reviewed, in consultation with OD, programmes. This will be carried out in October and the findings reported to members.

## **Outside Bodies**

All elected members who are appointed to outside bodies are provided with contact details and information on the organisation where available. It is not possible for the council to deal with the specific development requirements of members appointed to represent the council on every outside body on which it has a nominated representative. The range and diversity of such organisations are extensive, and their operations are out with the locus of the Council. Should training and development be required this should be provided by the outside body. A policy [Item 9 Report 131 Outside Bodies.pdf](#) has been approved for members appointed to all other outside bodies to clarify their potential responsibilities as a nominated representative of the Council.

In terms of the new Outside Bodies Policy, questionnaires have been issued to all non-statutory outside bodies in order that information can be produced to allow members who are invited to participate on an outside body to have a full awareness of what that participation entails.

## **Political Skills Assessment**

Angus Council has signed up to the Political Skills Assessment which is developed by The Improvement Service. This process is supported and administered by the Organisation Development Team.

Elected Members will be invited to meet with Organisational Development once a year. The Political Skills Assessment will be completed which will form the foundation for future discussions.

## **Ongoing Development and Training Sessions**

In addition to mandatory training and committee development, elected members will be invited to a broad range of information and development sessions throughout their term of office. The expectation is that members continue to develop, not only through on-job activity, but also by attending development sessions and through e-learning on the council's Always Learning platform. Members are also actively encouraged to bring forward ideas and suggestions for these sessions for discussion and consideration.

## **9. Always Learning**

E-Learning courses are available on Always Learning. There is a wide range of topics, however the following is a list of e-learning courses that members are encouraged to complete.

### **Annual Training**

- Annual Governance Reminder
- Data Protection Induction
- Freedom of Information
- Information Governance
- Equality & Diversity Essentials

## **IT**

- Digital Guidance
- Digital Signatures
- Outlook, One Note
- Phish

## **Courses of Interest**

- Our Council
- Our Staff
- Choice Based Letting Applicants User Guides
- Community Empowerment Act
- Getting it Right for Every Child in Angus
- Introduction to Community Engagement
- Keeping Safe and Secure
- Managing Equality and Diversity
- Introduction to Service Design
- Option Appraisals