

FULL COUNCIL
29th September 2022

Report Title	Councillor Learning and Development Policy
Report Author	Adele Wylie (Director of Human Resources & Governance/Monitoring Officer)

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider and approve the draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. North Northamptonshire Council signed up to the East Midlands Region Councillor Development Charter on 28th July 2021.

2.2. As part of the Charter process, the Council is required to approve and maintain a written and up-to-date councillor learning and development strategy, of which the Councillor Learning and Development Policy forms part.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that Full Council:

a) Approve the Draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

3.2. Reasons for Recommendations

(i) Award of the Councillor Development Charter is dependent upon the Council being able to demonstrate that it has a strategic approach to

councillor development. The Councillor Learning and Development Policy is pivotal to this requirement.

- (ii) The Councillor Learning and Development Policy sets out the framework to enable North Northamptonshire Councillors to be equipped with the support they need in their roles. The framework it contains is flexible to local needs whilst remaining resilient in times of national and global challenge and sets out an effective and positive approach to ensuring all councillors are supported and developed.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. On 28th July 2021 Full Council committed to developing the necessary strategy, processes and environment to support effective councillor learning and development, with the aim of eventually achieving accreditation of the East Midlands region Councillor Development Charter. At the same time, the Council constituted a cross-party councillor development working group to achieve this aim (the “Member Development Working Group”).
- 4.2. The East Midlands Regional Charter for Councillor Development aims to promote best practice in councillor development. The Charter has an accreditation process which is set against standards. These standards have been developed in conjunction with the Local Government Association and other regions.
- 4.3. There are three essential criteria to achieving the Charter. These are:
 - 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support.
 - 2. The Council has a strategic approach to councillor development.
 - 3. Learning and development is effective in building councillors' skills and knowledge.
- 4.4. Within each of these criteria there are elements and requirements to demonstrate that the criteria are being met. These do not dictate what should be in the Council’s strategy or the nature of the content or the delivery mechanisms that should be used. The emphasis is on ensuring that all councillors are appropriately developed and supported so that they can be effective in their roles. Achieving the Councillor Development Charter is a chance for the Council’s work to be recognised.
- 4.5. The draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy has been drafted over the course of the last year, along with some other essential documentation to enable work to begin on collation of the evidence required for award of the Charter.
- 4.6. The Member Development Working Group met on 8th August 2022 to consider the draft policy prior to submission to full Council for approval. It endorsed the document submitted as **Appendix A** with a recommendation that the Policy be approved by Council.
- 4.7. The Council is required to regularly review and refresh its Councillor Learning and Development Policy once it has been approved by Council, and it is

proposed that this process is overseen in future by the Democracy and Standards Committee every three years.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Charter, the Councillor Learning and Development Policy is required to be approved by Full Council.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Member Development Working Group is meeting again on 26th September 2022 and thereafter will meet quarterly. Once the Group develops its action plan, based both on the Councillor Learning and Development Policy and the evidence requirements for the Councillor Development Charter, progress will be regularly reported in a planned Councillor Bulletin

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

There are currently no identified financial implications that cannot be contained within existing budgets.

7.2. Legal and Governance

None

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

The Councillor Learning and Development Policy has been developed in harmony with the Council's aims and objectives as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

7.4. Risk

If the Council does not have a formally adopted Councillor Learning and Development Policy there is a significant risk that it would not be awarded the East Midlands Region Councillor Development Charter.

7.5. Consultation

The Member Development Working Group has been consulted on the contents of the draft Policy as set out above.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

Not applicable. Matters relating to councillors' training and development currently fall within the remit of the Member Development Working Group and Full Council.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

None.

7.8. Equality Implications

All learning opportunities are accessible across all political parties and conform to the Council's Equalities Policy and practice.

7.9. Climate Impact

There are no identified climate or environmental implications.

7.10. Community Impact

The Councillor Learning and Development Policy will help ensure that councillors not only offer more effective leadership to their communities, but work at the highest strategic level to draw down external funding to improve facilities and services in their local area

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

None specific to this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. None