London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

**Corporate Councillor Learning and Development Plan**

# 1. Purpose

This Learning and Development Plan outlines the Member Development Strategy for the Borough. It provides a framework of good practice for elected Members in LB Barking and Dagenham to ensure that learning and development supports the vision for the borough, develops Members in their various roles, is cost effective and meets the highest standards.

It will ensure that Members achieve their goals through professional and personal development. It will enable Members to realise their full potential as community leaders, representatives and policy makers.

This Plan is supported by Members and Corporate Strategy Group and confirms the commitment to resource, provide, promote and evaluate learning and development for Members. A Steering group of Members and Officers called the “Member Development Group” is responsible for ensuring the objectives of the Plan are met.

The specific areas covered are:

* The relevance of learning and development (to meet organisational and individual needs)
* Learning and development planning
* Equality of access to Learning and development
* Responsibilities for learning and development
* Financial resources
* Learning and development provision
* Induction
* Evaluation of learning and development

# 2. Identifying Learning and Development needs

Objective: To ensure that all learning and development is focused on achieving organisational objectives and priorities.

Learning and development will be linked to the Council’s vision:

**One borough; one community; no one left behind** and

**its Corporate Priorities:**

Well Run Organisation, Inclusive Growth, Participation and Engagement, Prevention, Independence and Resilience

Needs based on these will be identified and prioritised by the Member Development Group following advice, as appropriate from the portfolio Member for Member Development, the Corporate Strategy Group, the Chief Executive and the Director of Law, Governance and Human Resources. Needs identified by Members themselves either via their PDPs, 360 degree feedback, Training Needs Analysis, through evaluations or direct requests to the Member Development Officer will be used to inform this process.

Objective: To ensure that external developments that affect the Council and its Services such as environmental and legislative changes, are anticipated and where necessary, development opportunities are provided to enable Members to meet these needs.

It is the responsibility of the Directors/Divisional Directors to ensure that Members receive the learning and development they need to meet service-specific priorities and objectives (e.g. planning requirements, licensing regulations, Education, Health, etc). Any required learning and development should be liaised with the Member Development officer.

Objective: To ensure a process exists for identifying individual Members’ learning and development needs, relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Members will be encouraged to identify their specific learning and development needs. All Members will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Member Development officer to discuss their own and the Council’s needs. Members will be encouraged to develop a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or access their learning needs through a 360 degree feedback process.

3. Learning and Development Planning

Objective: The Member Development Programme will be developed with the Member Development Group

The Programme will be based on the evaluation of the previous year and the needs identified in 2 above. It will be communicated to all Members. It will be monitored and reviewed by the Member Development Group.

The Programme will include regular scheduled All-Member workshops. These workshops will be planned in four periods (e.g. Sep-Dec, Jan-Apr, etc) to allow for changes/new needs that come about over the year or are identified by the Member Development Group.

There will also be provision for smaller group sessions or individual learning to accommodate individual needs identified either by the Member Development Group or through PDPs/360’s or through Member requests to the Member Development Officer.

Senior Officers may also make recommendations for training.

4. Equality of Opportunity and Access to Learning and Development

Objective: To ensure that all Members have equal opportunity and access to learning and development opportunities, subject to the needs of their role and responsibilities and the objectives of the Council.

Equal opportunity and access refers to:

* Information relating to learning and development opportunities
* Selection for participation in learning and development activities
* Access to learning and development

Information relating to learning and development opportunities will be communicated in a variety of ways including email, telephone calls, members’ App, advertising in Members’ room.

Where possible, Members will be offered a range of development opportunities to suit individual styles and needs. These will include all-member workshops, group based workshops, online courses and where appropriate individual coaching.

Members will be selected for development opportunities on the basis of need as decided by the Lead Member and/or the Member Development Officer in consultation with the Member Development Group.

Development opportunities will be as accessible as possible in relation to venues, development methods, content and equipment used. Workshops/events will be offered at alternative times to those who require them.

Venues will be accessible to those with physical and/or sensory disabilities and timing of events will be flexible, offering evening, weekend and daytime sessions. Religious and cultural observance will be respected, e.g. courses, briefings, etc, will not normally be held on Friday evenings. Where food is served at events, consideration will be given to cultural and religious preferences.

Care cost reimbursement is available to Members attending Member Development sessions.

5. Responsibilities for Member Development

Objective: To ensure that responsibility for Members’ Learning and Development is identified and defined.

Member Development Group

The Member Development Group is responsible for overseeing the development and review of the Member Development Programme. It is responsible for identifying priority development needs and for ensuring development is provided to meet these needs. Member Development Group members will act as ‘champions’ for learning and development and will secure the support and active involvement of Group Leaders and other Members, when necessary.

Group Leaders

Group Leaders are responsible for supporting development initiatives as well as encouraging Members to identify and meet their development needs. and to share their learning experiences with others. They can delegate that responsibility should they wish to a nominated Member or to the group Political Assistants.

Elected Members

All Elected Members are responsible for identifying their learning and development needs and ensuring they take part in development opportunities relevant to their roles, responsibilities and needs. They are also expected to give feedback and complete relevant evaluation after each learning experience as well as sharing their learning with others. Members are encouraged to develop a Personal Development Plan.

Member Development Officer

The Member Development Officer will have responsibility for co-ordinating Member learning and development. They will be aware of the role and responsibilities of Members as well as being a skilled and experienced learning and development practitioner. Their role will include supporting the Member Development Group, ensuring regular identification of individual training needs for all Members and that assistance is given, when necessary, with developing Personal Development Plans.

They will develop the Member Development Programme and allocate and manage the budget for Member learning and development. They will ensure identified development activities are provided to the highest standard and are evaluated.

6. Financial Resources for Learning and Development

Objective: To ensure that adequate financial resources are identified and allocated to meet learning and development needs and that their use is monitored to guarantee cost-effectiveness.

A budget for Members’ learning and development will be allocated, annually and will be managed by the Member Development Officer who will ensure development needs identified and prioritised by the Member Development Group are met. The use of resources will be monitored and evaluated by the Member Development Group and the designated officer to ensure value for money.

7. Learning and Development Provision

***Objective: To ensure that a range of high quality learning and development opportunities are provided to meet identified needs.***

Members will have access to a range of development opportunities which may include:

* Training courses (internal, online & off-site)
* Conferences and seminars
* Coaching and Mentoring
* E-Learning
* 360 degree feedback process
* Reading, Internet resources eg YouTube

They will be encouraged to access development to equip them for firstly, any current role and secondly, for potential future roles.

***Objective: To ensure that all development providers meet the highest standards.***

Procedures will be in place to ensure that training and development providers meet the highest standards and are experienced and skilled trainers, coaches or presenters as well as specialists in their particular field. They will be expected to have a knowledge of local government and the requirements of elected Members.

Objective: To encourage development opportunities with other organisations and to share learning experiences as widely as possible.

Where possible opportunities will be sought for joint development initiatives with partner organisations, other Local Authorities and/or national bodies to encourage shared learning and to secure financial economies of scale. Members will be encouraged and expected to share their learning from external courses, conferences and seminars.

**8. Induction**

***Objective: To ensure that all new Elected Members, as well as those Members moving from existing into new roles, receive comprehensive induction and development suited to their experience, roles and needs.***

After each election, a comprehensive induction programme will be provided for all Members. This will involve a mix of briefings, training courses, reading materials, mentoring and possibly coaching.

Members elected mid-term, through by-elections, as well as those taking on new roles (e.g. Cabinet members, Scrutiny Chairs, members of Planning committees) will be helped to identify their learning and development needs and encouraged to develop an updated Personal Development Plan. It is the responsibility of the Member Development officer to ensure that any needs are identified and met as soon after (and where possible, before) an appointment is taken up.

New Cabinet Members or those moving into a new portfolio area will be provided with induction.

# 9. Evaluation of Learning and Development

***Objective: All learning and development will be evaluated to establish reactions to a development event, its impact on the individual and their performance in their role and, where possible, the impact on the Council as a whole.***

Feedback forms will be distributed at the end of planned learning and development activities to gauge immediate reaction in relation to the quality of the event and the extent to which the objectives were met. Members will be encouraged to review how they can put what they have learned into practice, to help them in their role.

Where recommendations are made as a result of evaluation, to improve learning and development, it is the responsibility of the Member Development Officer to ensure any changes are made.