



East Hampshire District Council

councillor development strategy

**East
Hampshire**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Improving
People's Lives*

East Hampshire District Council

1. Councillor Development Strategy

- 1.1 Councillor development is seen as important to help elected Councillors fulfil their roles and contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, objectives and aims. This strategy ensures that a long term view is taken of Councillor Development that also affords flexibility to reflect changing priorities.
- 1.2 This strategy recognises that Councillors are not employees of the Council and strives to help them seek a balance between their demanding roles inside and outside of the Council.
- 1.3 The Councillor Development Panel ("the Panel") has been appointed to promote, oversee and monitor the Council's member development programme.

The Panel is formed across all of the parties within the Council's membership and does not reflect political proportionality, representing the apolitical drive for Councillor development. The Panel meets a minimum of 4 times a year.

The Panel includes a spectrum of Councillors of varied positions including members of Cabinet, exhibiting the commitment from the Council's leadership to support development amongst members.

2. Vision

- 2.1 The vision is for all elected Councillors to have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively in their current or future roles within the Council.
- 2.2 To help achieve this vision, the following values will apply:
 - Development opportunities will be available to all elected Councillors irrespective of political allegiance.
 - Development activities will be based upon agreed training needs as identified through the Councillor needs analysis process.
 - Councillor development will be delivered through methods which ensure equality of access and taking into account different learning styles.
 - The Council will recognise that Councillors may have transferable skills which can be utilised in the Council to help them perform their Council role.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The Councillor development strategy aims to:

- Create a clear framework for Councillor development based upon individual and organisational needs.
- Ensure all Councillors have the necessary skills at the required level to conduct their roles effectively.
- Ensure Councillors have the skills and knowledge needed to oversee the delivery of high quality public services through their community leadership roles.
- Ensure Councillors feel confident to undertake their roles.
- Ensure Councillors are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities to deliver good governance.
- Support the continued development of Councillors to prepare them for roles they may fill in the future.
- Attract and retain high calibre Councillors.
- Provide all Councillors with the opportunity for development.

4. Identifying Councillor Development Needs

4.1 Each year a Councillor Development Programme will be created which will be tailored to the priority skills and knowledge areas that are identified from the following avenues:

- a) **Councillor Needs Analysis** – Councillor participation to identify development needs will be key. Councillors will be expected to complete a Councillor Needs Analysis form which will provide Councillors with an opportunity to identify their specific training needs.

Councillors will be expected to take responsibility for their own personal development and maintain appropriate knowledge/skill levels to ensure that they are able to conduct their roles effectively. This will include an opportunity to meet on a one to one basis with the Leader/Deputy Leader or a Cabinet Member to discuss their personal development. This will also provide each Councillor with an opportunity to discuss their future aspirations in order for development activity to be put in place which will support this.

- b) **Review of Corporate Strategy** – The Council will monitor its objectives, performance and external environment to identify factors that may give rise to changing development needs. Such factors may include changes to corporate priorities, changes in legislation, developments in local government services, changes in local government structures/funding or developments affecting other public sector bodies or organisations. A review of these factors may result in priority training needs being identified for the year.

- c) **Review of the role of Councillors** – The Council will review the role descriptions for elected Councillors as outlined at Appendix A. The Councillor Development Programme will take account of the content of the role descriptions to ensure that training is delivered which provides Councillors with the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil the specific roles identified. Each newly elected Councillor will be required to participate in an induction programme relevant to their role.
- d) **Specialist Role Needs** – Many Councillors will have additional roles which they fulfil or are likely to fulfil in the future. These roles often require specialist or more focused training.

These roles include:

- Leader/Deputy Leader of the Council
- Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council
- Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Committees or Sub-Committees
- Cabinet Member
- Committee Member for Regulatory committees e.g. Licensing, Planning
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Audit

Training needs for these roles will be identified from the specific role descriptions. Councillors fulfilling specialist roles will be required to attend training relevant to the role in order to be able to fulfil the role.

5. How Councillor Development Needs will be met

5.1 Development needs will be met from a range of options in order to support the diverse development needs and learning styles of elected Councillors.

5.2 In some cases, the Council will be able to deliver in-house courses using officers. Where necessary, the Council will source external providers for those development needs which require more specialist support/expertise.

5.3 Delivery methods may include:

- Training courses
- Seminars
- External conferences
- Councillor briefings
- E-learning packages
- Distance learning packages
- Visits to other councils or relevant partners
- Shadowing opportunities
- Mentoring opportunities

5.4 Councillors will be encouraged to be involved with the development of fellow Councillors where appropriate by leading workshops, disseminating expert knowledge, offering mentoring and by generally encouraging the take up of Councillor development opportunities. The delivery of these activities will be classed as contributing towards a Councillor's own continued professional development.

6. Resources

6.1 Each year budget and resources that need to be devoted to Elected Councillor development will be determined by the appropriate Head of Service for Democratic Services as part of the budget setting processes.

6.2 These resources will be monitored by the Democratic Services Team Leader to ensure that best value is being achieved.

6.3 Democratic Services will seek ways to use the budget for Councillor Development in the best way to meet the training needs of Councillors. For example, this could include opportunities for cross authority or partner training on a countywide, regional or national level, looking for training support from national/regional course providers such as the LGA or South East Employers or seeking relevant opportunities for Councillors to attend seminars/conferences hosted by partners.

7. Ongoing commitment

7.1 The Council will be committed to ensuring that Councillor Development activity is maintained which adheres to the principles of the Charter for Elected Councillor Development.

These principles are:

- Being fully committed to developing Elected Councillors in order to achieve the council's aims and objectives.
- Adopting a Councillor led strategic approach to Elected Councillor development.
- Ensuring that learning and development is effective in building capacity.
- Addressing wider development matters to support councillors

8. Review

8.1 The Councillor Development Strategy will be reviewed every two years by the Councillor Development Panel and Democratic Services or sooner at the request of the Leader.

The Differing Roles of an Elected Councillor

ROLE DESCRIPTION – CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Purpose of Role:

To be the Council's First Citizen, to chair and preside over meetings of the Council and to be the Council's ceremonial representative.

Duties and responsibilities:

- (a) To preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of councillors and the interests of the community;
- (b) To ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which members who are not on the Cabinet are able to hold the Cabinet, boards and committee Chairmen to account;
- (c) To promote public involvement in the Council's activities e.g. to take the Council's messages and themes out into the community and help to work towards achieving the Council's aims and objectives;
- (d) To be the conscience of the Council;
- (e) To attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and as he/she determines appropriate;
- (f) To support one or more good causes and to devote considerable time and energy to those causes, both through fund raising and by giving and obtaining publicity;
- (g) To represent the Council at Civic and related events both within and outside the area;
- (h) To encourage by deed and help all voluntary organisations in the area; and
- (i) To be non-political.

Skills Required:

- Ability to chair large meetings effectively;
- Outgoing and approachable;
- Adept at public speaking;
- Confident and persuasive;
- To be able to take a non political stance; and
- To be able to promote the Council in diverse situations.

All of the above applies to the role of Vice-Chairman of the Council.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – LEADER

Purpose of Role:

The Leader of the Council provides political leadership and works together with Cabinet Members to set out a vision for the Council and the strategic plans that will help the Council to achieve it.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Political leadership

- (a) To provide political leadership of the Council.
- (b) To set out a vision for the Council and the strategic plans that will enable the Council to play its part in achieving that vision.
- (c) To provide political leadership in the coordination of policies, strategies and high quality service delivery across the Council.
- (d) To appoint and remove the members of the Cabinet and allocate Portfolio Holder functions.
- (e) To chair the Cabinet and share collective responsibility for Cabinet decisions.
- (f) To be the principal political spokesperson for the Council.
- (g) To support, develop and performance manage members of the Cabinet and build and develop the Cabinet as a team.
- (h) To liaise and involve other elected Councillors when appropriate.

2. Corporate leadership

- (a) To give political direction to the Chief Executive and Joint Management Team.
- (b) To provide as part of the Council's service and financial planning process, political leadership in the development and implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan and Budget.
- (c) To work with officers to formulate policy proposals for the Cabinet.
- (d) To work with and support the Chief Executive and Joint Management Team in the implementation of policy.

3. Partnership and community leadership

- (a) To lead the promotion of council priorities amongst stakeholders and partners.
- (b) To build cross-district links that progress council objectives and priorities.
- (c) To represent the Council at and contribute to Local, national and international bodies/forums, to promote the interests of the Council, residents and local governance.

4. Reporting and accountability

- (a) To report as appropriate to Full Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- (b) To appear before Governance, Audit & Scrutiny Committee as required.

5. Governance, Ethical Standards and relationships

- (a) To promote and support good governance of the Council.
- (b) To promote and support open and transparent government.
- (c) To support and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with officers.
- (d) To adhere to the Code of Conduct, Member/Officer Protocol and the highest standard of behaviour in public office.

Skills Required:

- Ability to lead and motivate
- Adept at public speaking
- Ability to Chair large meetings
- Drive and ambition
- Tact and diplomacy
- Strategic thinking
- Ability to assimilate complex information

All of the above applies to the role of Deputy Leader.

ROLE DESCRIPTION - PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Purpose of Role:

To be responsible for championing, developing and implementing the Council policies, strategies and service delivery within their Cabinet Portfolio.

Duties and responsibilities:

- (a) To take responsibility for a specific Cabinet Portfolio and share in undertaking executive responsibility for developing and progressing overall strategy, budget, policies, service delivery and priorities.
- (b) To give direction on, and ensure the development of the vision for, those services within their Portfolio so that they are consistent with the overall strategic approach of the Council.
- (c) To liaise with other Councillors and appropriate Officers at all levels to progress Council business.
- (d) To work as a team with other Cabinet Members.
- (e) To liaise with the Chief Executive and senior officers to ensure the effective management of the delivery of those services within the Portfolio throughout the District.
- (f) To speak on behalf of the Council in relation to Portfolio responsibilities including representing the Portfolio at Full Council, representing the Portfolio and the Council to the media and on relevant external bodies, and to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the public, local businesses, the media, and voluntary and community groups in the area.
- (g) To encourage and participate in partnership working with organisations involved in the provision of services linked to those provided by the Council.
- (h) To facilitate and encourage public participation and consultation and to ensure the effective communication of Council policies and strategies to all Councillors, employees, residents, partner organisations and other stakeholders.
- (i) To attend committee meetings of the Council, e.g. Government, Audit & Scrutiny Committee, and others where requested.
- (j) To have a thorough knowledge of the Constitution and the decision making processes within the Council.

These duties and responsibilities are in addition to those detailed in the role description of a Ward Councillor.

Skills Required:

Thinking Skills

- Ability to think strategically
- Ability to develop a clear vision
- Ability to think creatively, challenge and generate innovative and effective solutions
- Ability to scrutinise and respond positively to feedback, challenges and ideas.

Ambassadorial Skills

- Ability to manage the reputation of the Council, especially that of your Portfolio, as well as interacting with officers, Councillors, stakeholders, partners and the community.
- Ability to identify and exploit opportunities to promote the Council, to achieve corporate and community priorities.

Business Management Skills

- Understanding of the business of local government, especially budgets, corporate planning and performance management

Team Working Skills

- Ability to be part of a team, working together for the success of the Council
- Ability to share responsibility for success and non-achievement

Decision Making Skills

- Ability to analyse complex and often conflicting information
- Ability to make decisions linked to the strategic direction and priorities of the Council.
- Ability to ensure that the 'right' information and the 'right' people are involved in the decision making process.

These skills are required in addition to those detailed in the competencies for a Ward Councillor.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – MEMBER PROJECT LEAD

Purpose of Role:

To assist a Portfolio Holder to champion, develop and implement the Council policies, strategies and service delivery within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member to whom they are assigned.

Duties and responsibilities:

- (a) To take responsibility for an assigned part of a specific Cabinet Portfolio and share in the responsibility for developing and progressing strategy, budget, policies, service delivery and priorities for the area delegated.
- (b) To liaise with other Councillors and appropriate Officers at all levels to progress Council business.
- (a) To work as a team with other Cabinet Members and Assistant Portfolio Holders.
- (b) To liaise with the Chief Executive and senior officers to ensure the effective management of the delivery of duties delegated by the Cabinet Member within the Portfolio throughout the District.
- (c) To speak on behalf of the Council in relation to the delegated Portfolio responsibilities which may include representing the Portfolio at Full Council, representing the Portfolio and the Council to the media and on relevant external bodies, and to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the public, local businesses, the media, and voluntary and community groups in the area.
- (d) To encourage and participate in partnership working with organisations involved in the provision of services linked to those provided by the Council.
- (e) To facilitate and encourage public participation and consultation and to ensure the effective communication of Council policies and strategies to all Councillors, employees, residents, partner organisations and other stakeholders.
- (f) To attend committee meetings of the Council where requested.
- (g) To have a thorough knowledge of the Constitution and the decision making processes within the Council.

These duties and responsibilities are in addition to those detailed in the role description of a Ward Councillor.

Skills Required:

Thinking Skills

- Ability to think strategically
- Ability to develop a clear vision
- Ability to think creatively, challenge and generate innovative and effective solutions
- Ability to scrutinise and respond positively to feedback, challenges and ideas.

Ambassadorial Skills

- Ability to manage the reputation of the Council, especially that of the assigned area of your Portfolio, as well as interacting with officers, Councillors, stakeholders, partners and the community.
- Ability to identify and exploit opportunities to promote the Council, to achieve corporate and community priorities.

Business Management Skills

- Understanding of the business of local government, especially budgets, corporate planning and performance management

Team Working Skills

- Ability to be part of a team, working together for the success of the Council
- Ability to share responsibility for success and non-achievement

Decision Making Skills

- Ability to analyse complex and often conflicting information
- Ability to make decisions linked to the strategic direction and priorities of the Council.
- Ability to ensure that the 'right' information and the 'right' people are involved in the decision making process.

These skills are required in addition to those detailed in the competencies for a Ward Councillor

ROLE DESCRIPTION - WARD COUNCILLOR

Purpose of Role:

To participate constructively and effectively in the good governance of the Council.

Duties and responsibilities:

- (a) To observe the Members' Code of Conduct, act at all times with probity and propriety in the best interests of the Council and maintain confidentiality in all relevant Council business.
- (b) To be collectively the ultimate policy-makers by contributing actively to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery.
- (c) To represent effectively and impartially the Ward to which they were elected and bring their communities' views and concerns into the Council's decision-making process by becoming the advocate of and for their communities.
- (d) To champion causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community and campaign for improvement of quality of life in the community in terms of equity, economy and the environment.
- (e) To respond to constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and impartially, to deal with individual casework and act as advocate in resolving constituents' particular concerns or grievances.
- (f) To participate effectively as a Member of any Committee, Sub-Committee, working group or other body to which they are appointed and to develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services, powers, duties, policies and practices including a good working relationship with officers of the Council.
- (g) To represent the Council effectively on any outside body to which they are appointed, providing two-way communication between the organisation and the Council.
- (h) To develop and maintain a working knowledge of other organisations and services within the District including the promotion of partnership working.
- (i) To contribute constructively to open government and generally encourage all sections of the community to participate in the democratic process.
- (j) To take part in continuous professional development in order to develop competencies, increase knowledge and receive updated information.

Skills Required for development:

- Good communication and interpersonal skills;
- Ability to relate to and deal with the public in a professional and timely manner and having regard to all aspects of equality and diversity;
- Ability to work professionally and effectively with Council officers and outside organisations;
- Community leadership skills; and
- Team Player.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Purpose of Role:

To be an effective and active participant of the Planning Committee in order to discharge the Council's function and responsibilities as a Local Planning Authority. To include considering, commenting on and coming to a balanced view when determining planning applications submitted to the Planning Committee.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Understand the legislative framework that planning operates under – this is currently the National Planning Policy Framework and the Joint Core Strategy/Local Plans that are adopted by the Council;
- (b) Keep up to date with both legislation and locally adopted guidance and policy including the Interim Housing Policy Statement and the Local Interim Planning Statements;
- (c) Keep an open mind in determining planning applications;
- (d) Come to a balanced and fair conclusion in the deliberation of planning applications having taken account of all relevant material planning considerations;
- (e) Make decisions that are unbiased and in the wider public interest;
- (f) Fully understand the rules preventing pre-determination of planning applications ;
- (g) Maintain good standards of probity that minimises the risk of legal challenge to the Authority;
- (h) Discuss any issues on planning matters with relevant officers whilst not compromising the officers impartiality or professional integrity;
- (i) Must attend planning training organised by officers in order to maintain the skills necessary to sit on the Planning Committee;
- (j) Failure to attend mandatory planning training will result in immediate suspension from the Planning Committee until the member has completed alternative mandatory training;
- (k) Members who are determining planning applications are expected to attend relevant site visits; and
- (l) Members of Planning Committee shall not be subjected to undue influence by any person other than that necessary to make a balanced decision on the planning issues presented.

Skills Required:

- Ability to digest large amounts of complex information;
- Effective questioning;
- Ability to understand and interpret planning law, policies and guidance;
- Tact and diplomacy; and
- Ability to interpret national and local strategy and geographic context.

Mandatory Planning Training and Requirements:

- All Councillors must attend mandatory training when they are first appointed to the Pool of 21 Councillors
- Councillors must attend quarterly training sessions in order to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. There will also be supplementary planning training as and when required by Officers.
- There will be an annual assessment of Planning Committee Member skills
- Members who wish to join the Planning Committee must submit an application outlining how they meet the role description requirements of being a Planning Committee Member.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Purpose of Role:

- Lead the Council's activities in relation to those functions covered by the Committee as stated in the Council's Constitution.
- Ensure that the Committee deals with its functions in a fair and proper manner.

Duties and responsibilities

- (a) Chair meetings of the Committee;
- (b) Ensure, in relation to each function of the Committee, that appropriate policies, rules, regulations and processes are adopted to enable the Committee to undertake its functions in a fair and even-handed manner within the Council's approved policies;
- (c) Liaise as appropriate with other Committees and Boards of the Council to ensure a joined up approach when applicable;
- (d) Ensure that all Members of, and Officers servicing, the Committee take full and proper account of relevant legislation in setting any relevant policies, rules, regulations and processes and in the determination of all business before the Committee;
- (e) Ensure Members of, and Officers servicing, the Committee comply with the rules relating to declaration of interests as appropriate; and
- (f) Ensure that appropriate Member training programmes and seminars are arranged to enhance Members knowledge and ability to carry out the Committee's functions in accordance with legislation, the Council's policies and other codes and rules affecting such functions.

Skills Required:

- Ability to chair meetings;
- Ability to diffuse confrontational situations;
- Effective listener; and
- Ability to drive debate effectively and efficiently.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – REGULATORY COUNCILLOR

(This profile applies equally to Councillors as members of the Licensing Committee and Licensing Panels)

Purpose of Role:

To be an effective and active participant of the Regulatory function involved in:

- Being a member of the Committee that discharges the planning function.
- Being a member of the Committee that discharges the licensing function.
- Considering, commenting on and coming to a balanced view on items of business for consideration.
- Aiding and contributing to Council policy in the regulatory areas.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Keeping up to date with both legislation and local adopted rules.
- (b) Receive and examine information regarding service areas.
- (c) Keep an open mind in relation to applications.
- (d) Come to a balanced and fair conclusion in the deliberation of applications that are presented to the regulatory committees.
- (e) Ensure that the principles of equality and fairness are integral to all actions and policies of the Council.

Skills Required:

- Ability to digest large amounts of complex information;
- Effective questioning;
- Ability to interpret and think through situations; and
- Tact and diplomacy.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – COUNCILLOR ON THE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(This profile applies equally to Councillors as members of any Panel Hearings)

Purpose of Role:

To be an effective and active participant of the Governance, Audit & Scrutiny Committee involved in:

- Holding local decision-makers to account;
- considering, commenting on and challenging the performance and delivery of services;
- Identify and investigate areas of service delivery in need or improvement or enhancement;
- Aiding and contributing to Council policy development;
- Being a member of the Committee that discharges the governance function;
- considering, commenting on and coming to a balanced view on items of business for consideration; and
- Aiding and contributing to Council policy in the governance areas.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Devise a manageable work programme with Scrutiny colleagues;
- (b) Receive and examine information regarding service areas;
- (c) Monitor the performance of services, including participating in reviews as appropriate;
- (d) Take an active role in reviews and policy development;
- (e) Ensure that the principles of equality and fairness are integral to all actions and policies of the Council;
- (f) Hold Cabinet members and Senior Officers to account and ensure that agreed decision making and consultation processes are followed in respect of decisions;
- (g) Taking an active role in training and development programmes to ensure that meaningful scrutiny is undertaken as effectively as possible;
- (h) Keeping up to date with both legislation and local adopted rules;
- (i) Keep an open mind in relation to cases of complaints;
- (j) Come to a balanced and fair conclusion in the deliberation of issues that are presented to the Governance, Audit & Scrutiny Committee; and

- (k) Ensure that the principles of public office are integral to all actions and policies of the Council.

Skills Required:

- Ability to digest large amounts of complex information;
- Effective questioning;
- Ability to interpret, challenge and think through situations;
- Tact and diplomacy;
- Planning and Scoping of large and often complex subjects;
- Ability to differentiate between detailed operational aspects and the larger strategic view;
- Good analytical and research skills; and
- Team player.

ROLE DESCRIPTION – COUNCILLOR ON THE JOINT HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(This profile applies equally to Councillors as members of any Panel Hearings)

Purpose of Role:

To be an effective and active participant of the Joint Human Resources Committee involved in:

- Being a member of the Committee that discharges the human resources function.
- Considering, commenting on and coming to a balanced view on items of business for consideration.
- Aiding and contributing to Council policy in the human resource areas.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- (a) Keeping up to date with both legislation and local adopted rules.
- (b) Receive and examine information regarding service areas.
- (c) Keep an open mind in relation to panel hearings.
- (d) Come to a balanced and fair conclusion in the deliberation of both issues that are presented to the Joint Human Resources Committee and any panel hearings.

Skills Required:

- Ability to digest large amounts of complex information;
- Effective questioning;
- Ability to interpret and think through situations; and
- Tact and diplomacy.