



## FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

|                         |  |
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| <b>Subject</b>          | Adoption of Member Development Strategy 2023-2027 and Member Development Programme 2023-2027   |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>   | Councillor Caroline Topping<br>Leader of the Council   |
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| Is the report Open or Exempt? | OPEN |
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|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information. | Not applicable |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | None           |

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

Full Council is asked to approve the Member Development Strategy and Member Development Programme 2023-2027 which covers activities following the Induction in May 2023 up to preparation for the next term of office from May 2027.

The cross party Member Development Steering Group created these two documents with the aim of ensuring that Members are supported and developed throughout their term of office.

The Member Development Strategy sets out:

- The terms of reference of the Steering Group.
- The vision and values of the Strategy.
- The aims of the Strategy.
- Details of how Member Development needs will be identified and met.
- The support available for prospective and new Councillors.
- Councillor Communications Guidelines.
- Member Support Scheme.
- An Action Plan detailing the Steering Group's activities over the term of office.

The Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date and continues to meet the needs of Councillors.

The Member Development Programme sets out:

- The key processes in the Member Development Strategy.
- Proposals for the future including the development of Councillor Development Pathways to ensure Members know what training is required for specific roles; the development of an enhanced Leadership offer to support Members in their roles; bespoke programmes of support for individual Councillors where needed; an annual Member Development Workshop; and the exploration of a Councillor Development Workshop involving Town and Parish Councillors as well as Youth Councillors.
- Details of the Local Government Association Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus accreditation process.
- The support available to Members to help them access development opportunities.

### **Options:**

The two documents provide a strategic focus and commitment to providing Councillor Development activities. If Members do not have the necessary skills and knowledge they will not be able to carry out their roles and duties effectively for the benefit of East Suffolk residents.

### **Recommendation/s:**

That Full Council adopt the Member Development Strategy 2023-2027 and Member Development Programme 2023-2027.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

Member Development is a key element in ensuring that the necessary support and development is available to Councillors to enable them to carry out their roles effectively, in accordance with good governance and to the benefit of the community.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

The Strategy acknowledges that Councillors have a key role in achieving the vision set out in East Suffolk's Our Direction 2028 Strategic Plan.

**Environmental:**

Not applicable.

**Equalities and Diversity:**

No negative impact has been identified on any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 as a result of the new Member Development Strategy or Member Development Programme with both aiming to be inclusive for all Members or prospective candidates.

**Financial:**

The Member Development Steering Group oversees a budget of £50,000, over a four-year period, for Councillor Development activities. In order to make the best use of funds at the appropriate times, the budget has been profiled over that four year period with greater funds available in the first two years after the elections, and less funding in the years leading up to the subsequent elections.

**Human Resources:**

Councillor development activity is supported by the Democratic Services team with other teams such as HR and ICT providing additional support as and when necessary.

**ICT:**

Not applicable.

**Legal:**

Not applicable.

**Risk:**

If the Council did not have a Member Development Strategy and Member Development Programme setting out how it provides support to Councillors this could lead to them not being able to fulfil their roles and duties and not being able to serve the needs of residents.

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| <b>External Consultees:</b> | None |
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

| Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal:<br>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)  |  | Primary priority                    | Secondary priorities                |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>T01</b>   | <b>Growing our Economy</b>                                   |                                     |                                     |
| P01  | Build the right environment for East Suffolk                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P02  | Attract and stimulate inward investment                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P03  | Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P04  | Business partnerships  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P05  | Support and deliver infrastructure                           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>T02</b>   | <b>Enabling our Communities</b>                              |                                     |                                     |
| P06  | Community Partnerships                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P07  | Taking positive action on what matters most                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P08  | Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P09  | Community Pride  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>T03</b>   | <b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>                  |                                     |                                     |
| P10  | Organisational design and streamlining services              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P11  | Making best use of and investing in our assets               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P12  | Being commercially astute                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P13  | Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P14  | Review service delivery with partners                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>T04</b>   | <b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>                     |                                     |                                     |
| P15  | Digital by default   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P16  | Lean and efficient streamlined services                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P17  | Effective use of data  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P18  | Skills and training  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P19  | District-wide digital infrastructure                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>T05</b>   | <b>Caring for our Environment</b>                            |                                     |                                     |
| P20  | Lead by example  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P21  | Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P22  | Renewable energy   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| P23  | Protection, education and influence                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>XXX</b>   | <b>Governance</b>  |                                     |                                     |
| XXX  | How ESC governs itself as an authority                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| <b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>   |  |                                     |                                     |
| <p>The Council is committed to supporting Councillor’s learning and development needs, ensuring that all Members have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to effectively carry out their community leadership roles. This commitment supports the four themes in the Our Direction 2028 Strategic Plan which are Environmental Impact, Sustainable Housing, Tackling Inequalities and Thriving Economy. Councillors play a key role in developing and delivering these themes, for the benefit of the Council and its communities.</p> |  |                                     |                                     |

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

| 1 Background facts |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1.1                | The Council appointed a new Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) at its first meeting on 24 May 2023 following the elections. This demonstrated the continued commitment to Member Development and providing Councillors with the support, training and development they need to carry out their roles effectively for the benefit of East Suffolk residents. |
| 1.2                | The cross party MDSG comprises the Leaders of each political group of the Council, and several Members who had expressed an interest in Member Development, including a number of Councillors who had never been elected as District Councillors before.  |
| 1.3                | At its first meeting in July 2023, the MDSG started to review the Strategy and the Member Development Programme which were both approved on 27 November 2023.   |

| 2 Current position |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 2.1                | The MDSG intended that the Strategy would be in place from 2023 to 2027 and cover all of the Members' development needs during the whole term of office. The Strategy has a large remit. It aims to meet the needs of newly elected Councillors, as well as experienced, returning Councillors. It also looks to support those who are Members of other authorities (twin or triple hatters), and to provide information and support for those who might be interested in standing for election, in future. |
| 2.2                | The MDSG will review the Strategy and Action Plan annually to ensure it remains current and helps Members deliver against the four themes of the new Our Direction 2028 Strategic Plan.   |
| 2.3                | As part of the Strategy review, the MDSG focussed on the Member Development Plans to ensure there was a real benefit to Members in completing their Plan, and that it offered them an opportunity to identify any training and development needs which they had. These needs can then be considered when the MDSG creates the annual Training and Development Schedule.   |
| 2.4                | One of the benefits of reviewing the Strategy regularly is the opportunity to refresh and review elements within it such as training feedback form which Members are encouraged to complete after attending training as this helps the MDSG monitor the effectiveness of the Member Development Programme.  |
| 2.5                | The Member Support Scheme was also reviewed to ensure that all Councillors have access, if they want it, to peer support generally and also for any specific roles they may have.   |
| 2.6                | The MDSG felt it was important to emphasise the ongoing commitment which the Authority had towards Member Development, including the availability of sufficient resources, both in monetary terms and Officer time.   |
| 2.7                | A key element of the Strategy is continuing to achieve the Local Government Association's Councillor Development Charter Plus status to recognise that East Suffolk has built an effective approach to Councillor Development. Following a rigorous assessment process in December 2023, the Council successfully retained the Charter Plus status for its Councillor Development activities. A small number  |

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|  | of recommendations were made by the assessment panel and these will be considered by the MDSG in due course. |
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### 3 How to address current situation

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| 3.1 | Once the Member Development Strategy is approved, this will provide the focus and direction for the MDSG's activities.  |
| 3.2 | Approval of the Member Development Programme will provide a framework for creating the Annual Training and Development Schedule, a Leadership Development Programme and tailored programmes for individual Councillors based on their specific needs. |

### 4 Reason/s for recommendation

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| 4.1 | Full Council approving the Member Development Strategy and Member Development Programme will provide the MDSG with a focus and direction for Councillor development activities. |
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## Appendices

### Appendices:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Appendix A</b> | Member Development Strategy 2023-2027  |
| <b>Appendix B</b> | Member Development Programme 2023-2027 |

### Background reference papers:

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| None |
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