



Tuesday, 5 November 2024

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles,  
Cabinet Member for Corporate  
Governance and Licensing

## Councillor Development Strategy

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

To request approval of the Councillor Development Strategy for South Kesteven District Council.

### Recommendations

**Cabinet is recommended to approve the Councillor Development Strategy for South Kesteven District Council.**

### Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards)

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

1.1 There are no significant legal or procurement implications arising from this report.

*Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)*

### ***Legal and Governance***

1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

*Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1. A commitment to the development of the Council's elected members is included within the Corporate Plan 2024-27.
- 2.2. Under the 'Effective Council' priority of the Corporate Plan, the Council aspires to:

"Produce and deliver a Councillor Development Strategy and accompanying programme to achieve accredited Councillor Development Charter status".

## **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. The East Midlands Councillor Development Charter provides a nationally recognised framework for Councillor development. It is an accreditation which demonstrates that the Councillors of an Authority are appropriately developed and supported so that they can be effective in their roles.
- 3.2. Working towards Charter status requires the Council to demonstrate that it meets a range of criteria which will be adjudicated by East Midlands Councils. A significant piece of evidence to support the Council's commitment to the development of its Councillors is a Councillor Development Strategy.
- 3.3. The Councillor Development Strategy emphasises the Council's commitment to the ongoing training and development of its elected members, ensuring that all Councillors have access to opportunities enabling them to perform effectively in their current and future roles. The draft Strategy is attached at **Appendix A**.

- 3.4. The Council has historically delivered a Member Development Programme consisting of sessions ranging from informal briefings to mandatory training, led by a mixture of internal and external facilitators. Councillors have also been provided with opportunities to participate in events hosted by organisations such as East Midlands Councils and the Local Government Association, as well as participate in schemes such as the Local Government Association's Leadership Programme.
- 3.5. Furthermore, a comprehensive induction programme for newly elected and re-elected members was delivered following the all-out District Council elections held in May 2023.
- 3.6. The Councillor Development Strategy seeks to build upon the current Member Development Programme and improve the Council's offer to its elected members with a more structured approach. The Strategy acknowledges the different roles and responsibilities Councillors hold on the Council and the varying knowledge and skills associated with them, whether that be in the context of a ward member in their community leadership role, or other roles of special responsibility on the Council.
- 3.7. A Personal Development Plan process included within the Strategy will assist Councillors in the assessment of their own knowledge and skills, their current role and their future aspirations on the Council. This will not only help identify any areas for further improvement from a personal perspective but may also identify a wider training and development need for the Council, which could in turn shape the content of the Member Development Programme.
- 3.8. Feedback and evaluation of training and development is a feature of the Strategy, ensuring that the quality and effectiveness of sessions held for Members can be assessed and measured. This evaluation will be led by the re-established Councillor Development Group, consisting of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing and all political group leaders of the Council, who will also drive the principles of the Strategy forward.
- 3.9. The Councillor Development Group formally recommended the Councillor Development Strategy to Cabinet for approval at its meeting on 12 September 2024.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Not to adopt a Councillor Development Strategy.
- 4.2 To adopt the draft Councillor Development Strategy attached at Appendix A.
- 4.3 To suggest any amendments to the draft Councillor Development Strategy.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1. It is considered good practice for Councils to have a strategic approach in place to identify and facilitate the training and development of their elected members.
- 5.2. The criteria of the East Midlands Councillor Development Charter specifies an expectation that the Council has a Councillor Development Strategy in place. It would therefore be difficult to demonstrate that the Council meets the necessary criteria to achieve accreditation of Charter status without having adopted a Strategy.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1. The Councillor Development Group has considered the draft Councillor Development Strategy and has recommended its approval.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1. Appendix A – Councillor Development Strategy