

Executive

Member Development and Support Strategy

7 September 2009

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents a Member Development and Support Strategy for approval and updates the Executive on the general progress of the member development programme 2009/10.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) approve the Member Development and Support Strategy.
- (2) request an annual review of the Member Development and Support Strategy and the progress of the member support interviews.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Member training was identified as an area for improvement in the recent Corporate Performance Assessment. The Audit Commission commented that the Council should ensure better attendance at organised training events by monitoring and reviewing the completion of individual training and development plans.
- 1.2 A draft Member Development and Support Strategy is attached to this report which outlines how the Council aims to improve member development and support.

Proposals

- 1.3 Attendance at member support interviews is essential to ensure that the member development programme is responsive to the development and support needs of Councillors. Several member support interviews were carried out as part of the new member induction programme 2008. This trial

resulted in a more informed member development programme in 2008/09 and support interviews have been offered to all members in 2009. The interviews that have already been undertaken already in 2009 have provided useful information which will inform the member development programme in 2009/10 (see attached draft programme Appendix 2)

- 1.4 The purpose of the member development programme is to ensure elected Members' are able to fulfil their roles as a representative for their Ward, along with any other appointments that they have within the Council and enable Members' to feel confident in understanding the issues facing local government in general. Learning events do not always have to involve sitting in a room and listening to a lecture or watching a power point presentation. The Council can offer a range of development opportunities such as the IDE&A Leadership Academy, site visits and member led training. In order to provide a more interesting development programme Officers are relying on Members to communicate their needs and it is essential that Member 'own' their development programme.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Member Development and Support Strategy is to confirm the Council's commitment to Member Development and Training and clearly establish the relationships between member support interviews, member support plans, the member development programme, attendance at training events and training evaluation. The strategy sets out the responsibilities of individual Councillors and the Council in terms of development and support.
- 1.6 Members have recently identified a need for support of their work on outside bodies and partnerships and the need for effective reporting back mechanisms. There will be a further report to the Executive to explain the support to be offered in this area. Executive members have also identified a need for members to be able to interpret management and financial information. These points have been incorporated in the draft member development programme 2009/10 (Appendix 1)

Conclusion

- 1.7 The Council has improved the support it offers to members which is evident in a well attended induction programme for new members in 2008. Further developments are planned in 2009/10 including a weekly electronic information bulletin for members and member information pages on the intranet. The Member Development and Support Strategy aims to cement these improvements and an annual review of support arrangements will ensure the Council is responsive to the needs of elected councillors.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 1.1 The Executive needs to consider the priority it gives to member development and support and its role in delivering the strategic priorities of the Council, and consider if member development is key to supporting elected members in fulfilling their roles as ward representatives and community leaders.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

Option One To agree the Draft Member Development and Support Strategy and review annually.

Option Two Leave member support and development as it is, without seeking a solution to poor attendance at training events which the Council would likely to be criticised for as part of any future assessment.

Option Three Amend the proposed Member Development and Support Strategy.

Consultations

Members Through the Members Support Interviews conducted, comments incorporated

Corporate Management Team Comments incorporated

Implications

(Financial, Legal and Risk and other implications e.g. Equalities, Human Resources, Data Quality and Environmental where relevant)

Financial: The resources required to deliver the member development programme are contained within existing budgets. No additional resources are required

Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant 01295 221982

Legal: No legal implications

Comments checked by Pam Wilkinson, Principal Solicitor 01295 221688

Risk Management: The Council may not achieve the objective of the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Debbie Pickford

Portfolio Holder for Organisation Development

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Member Development and Support Strategy
Appendix 2	Draft Member Development Programme 2008/09
Background Papers	
None	
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