

## South Hams District Council Member Development Strategy

(DRAFT)

### **1. Foreword and commitment**

At South Hams District Council, we recognise the importance of providing timely and appropriate learning and development opportunities to support the organisation in achieving its goals and vision. Through Investors in People, a structured approach is in place for officer development and it is the desire of Members to be provided with the same opportunities.

Every Member of South Hams District Council serves the communities they represent and the District as a whole to the best of their ability. The Council is therefore committed to the development of its elected Members to build capacity and capability to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to support with achieving its goals and visions for the community as a whole.

The world of local government is continually changing and it is the wish for Members to be fully equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to enhance the quality of decision making, public services and life in the South Hams.

This strategy outlines how we will develop a Council that has a learning culture and views Member Development as a key to its success.

### **2. Context**

Member Development is a structured approach to identifying and meeting the learning and development needs of Members to build capacity and support the organisation to achieve its goals

Through this process, we aim to ensure that:-

- Development activities support the Council in achieving its priorities while also meeting individual learning needs;
- A range of methods is used to deliver the desired outcomes;
- Members are taking the lead and that they are supported and committed to meeting their learning and development needs;
- Senior management are aware of the benefits of Member Development to the organisation; and
- There is equality of access to learning and development opportunities.

The Council will demonstrate its commitment to this process through the:-

- Engagement of Members in identifying their learning and development needs;
- Establishment of a Member Development Steering Group to oversee all aspects of the process;
- Allocation of adequate resources to identifying and meeting the learning needs of Members; and
- Signing of the declaration of commitment to achieving the standards of the South West Charter for Member Development.

### **3. How will we make it happen?**

#### **Member Involvement**

This process will be Member led and driven through the establishment of a cross party Member Development Steering Group. (Terms of Reference attached at Appendix A).

#### **Identification of learning needs**

Members will be offered the opportunity to identify their individual learning need on an annual basis.

Learning gaps will be identified against Role profiles as described in the Constitution and the Devon Member Skills Framework.

An annual learning and development plan will be produced, which will contain details of costs and the priority of learning needs. This will be reviewed and updated quarterly.

As part of this process, Corporate Priorities will be considered and learning activities included in the training programme.

#### **Delivery of development activities**

An annual budget will be agreed for Member Development and allocated based on identified needs.

Learning activities will be offered in a range of media, at times which are convenient to Members and in locations that are accessible to all.

Members will be encouraged to share their learning to ensure that best value is achieved from this process.

#### **Evaluation of activities**

All learning and development activities will be evaluated to ensure that objectives are being met.

#### **Reporting process**

Members and senior officers will be kept informed on Member Development issues as follows:-

- General communication to all Members will take place on a regular basis as appropriate;
- The Audit and Standards Committees will receive an update report bi-annually of learning and development undertaken, costs and impacts;

- A six monthly report will be submitted to the Strategic Management Team.

#### **4. Implementation and review of this strategy**

The success of Member Development is the responsibility of all, however specific areas of responsibility lie with:-

- The lead Executive Member for Member Development, the Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group and the Steering Group itself to agree, monitor and review all aspects of the process; and
- The Member Support Services team for the planning, organisation and evaluation of activities.

Once the Strategy is approved, it is intended that it will be reviewed in November 2010.