

Council – 29 October 2009

DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 2000

Financial Implications: None arising from this report.

Purpose

To consider a report which presents the draft Member Development Strategy for approval and outlines the Council's commitment to supporting Members in developing the necessary skills to serve the community.

Approval of this strategy is closely aligned to Corporate Priority 6: Value for Money: 'To improve core service performance in a cost effective way.'

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council RESOLVES to adopt the draft Member Development Strategy.

Background

1. Member Development is an area of work which the Council needs to improve upon and is increasingly being given added emphasis by central government. It can be defined as a *'system which provides a structured approach to identifying and meeting the Learning and Development needs of Members supporting them to develop the skills and knowledge to perform their role, serve the community and achieve the aims of the corporate plan'*.
2. The published Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper made reference to Members being 'champions for their local community, able to speak out on all issues affecting their local areas.' In order to build leadership capacity in local government learning and development, activities need to be targeted to support Members to enhance community governance and improve performance, service delivery and decision making, thereby allowing Members to be Community Champions.

Code of Corporate Governance 2008/09 – Compliance Review

3. As a subject area, Member Development was given added impetus when a gap was identified in the Annual Governance Statement whereby the Council was not adequately 'developing the capacity and capability of Members to be effective' beyond the Induction Programme.

4. When a review of the Statement was considered by a joint meeting of the Audit and Standards Committees on 7 April 2009, Members were informed that this gap had arisen due to the ongoing uncertainties surrounding the Local Government Review. Nonetheless, both Committees emphasised the importance of Member Development and therefore requested that this identified shortfall be addressed.

Member Development Steering Group

5. In order to make the desired progress on Member Development, a cross party Steering Group has been established and has met on two occasions. The agreed Terms of Reference of the Steering Group are attached at Appendix A.
6. The Steering Group has considered the draft Member Development Strategy at both of its meetings and is now recommending a version for approval (as attached at Appendix B).
7. The overall intention of the Strategy is to outline approaches to identifying and meeting learning and development needs to ensure that they are meeting both individual and corporate needs.

Risk Assessment

Opportunity	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
<p>By fully developing their potential, Members will be able to become even more involved in the corporate decision making of the Council and in the improved delivery of services.</p> <p>To provide Members with opportunities to expand upon their existing skills, interests and knowledge.</p>	<p>For Member Development to be successful, Member input and buy-in to the concept is critical.</p> <p>Identified training and development needs will have to be funded from within the existing Member training budget.</p>	<p>Member Development enables succession planning and continuity of decision making to the benefit of both Members and the authority.</p> <p>The skills and expertise of the Devon Member Development Officer post can be utilised to support the Strategy.</p>

Conclusion

8. The draft Member Development Strategy has twice been considered and amended by the Steering Group and Council approval is now sought for its adoption.

Darryl White
Member Support Services Manager

Council
 29 October 2009

Delyth Jenkins Evans
Monitoring Officer

Background Documents:
 None