

By: Mrs P A V Stockell, Chairman of the Informal Member Group: Member Development

To: Selection & Member Services Committee – Friday 14 March 2008

Subject: Member Development Policy

Introduction

1. The Committee will be aware that it established an Informal Member Group: Member Development comprising Mr Parry, Ms Harrison, Mrs Dean and myself to oversee the work required to achieve accreditation from the South East Employers for the award of the Member Development Charter. The Committee are reminded that the plan is to achieve the Charter by April 2009 in advance of the County Council elections.

Member Development Charter

2. (1) Members are reminded that the South East Employers Charter has a number of objectives:-

- (a) Being fully committed to developing elected Members in order to achieve the Council's aims and objectives;
- (b) Adopting a Member-led strategic approach to elected Member Development;
- (c) Having a Member Learning and Development Plan in place that clearly identifies the difference development activities will make;
- (d) Seeing that learning and development is effective in building capacity; and
- (e) Addressing wider development matters to promote work life balance and citizenship.

Charter Milestone and Standards

(2) In terms of Charter milestone/standards some of the tests that will be applied to demonstrate the commitment to Member Development include top political managerial leadership commitment to development of elected Members; a policy statement; equality of opportunity and access to learning and development; budget; officer resource support and dissemination of learning.

Strategic Approach to Member Development

(3) Charter milestones and standards here include a demonstration of a Member-led strategy; linkage to Council corporate plan; Member roles clearly set out;

process for identification of needs at individual and Council-wide level; structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities; appropriately learn with external partners; strategy for induction; addresses political leadership and team development and mechanisms for evaluation informing future plans identified.

Member Learning and Development Plan in place

(4) To demonstrate that the County Council has Member Learning and Development in place at the heart of the organisation it will need to demonstrate that it addresses development priorities; identifies what development activities should achieve; sets out how, when, where and who is responsible for these development opportunities and access to them; links individual plans and the Council's corporate and other plans together and ensures that a representative group of the elected Members are consulted.

Learning and development is effective in building capacity

(5) A further standard is for the County Council to demonstrate that Members do learn and develop effectively; that they share best practice where appropriate with others, including officers and other stakeholders; there is a clear evaluation in terms of impacts and benefits of the learning and development opportunities to ensure that the investment represents good value for money and how improvements to the learning and development activities can be achieved.

Elected Member Development provides work life balance and citizenship

(6) The final standard/Charter milestone is around assisting those elected Members with family responsibilities; reviewing how Council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms and ensuring that events are held for the community to become community leaders.

Member Development Policy

3. (1) The Informal Member Group (also act as the Members Champions within the three political groups) has considered a self assessment of where the County Council is so far in terms of evidence to support its application for accreditation for Member Development; identified the gaps and is assembling the evidence required before the South East Employers will be invited in to make an onsite assessment.

(2) The Informal Member Group has also considered a draft of an elected Member Development Policy statement which is attached as an appendix to this report. Following this Committee's consideration of this policy statement the County Council, on 3 April 2008, will be invited to approve the policy for incorporation into the Constitution of the County Council.

Recommendation

4. The Committee are asked to note the progress in working towards the South East Employers Member Development Charter and approve the elected Member Development Policy statement for onward transmission to the County Council for approval.

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Background Information: Include ALL background information taken into account in preparing the report. (This does not include previous Committee Reports)