

By: Andrew Bowles, Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Selection and Member Services Committee - 19 November 2015

Subject: Member Development

Summary: This report informs the Committee of the initiatives being undertaken by the Member Development Steering Group.

1. Introduction

The Committee will be aware that in September 2014 the Committee was re-awarded the Member Development Charter Plus for a further three years. Over the coming months the Council will be asked to participate in a mid-term review to assess the progress being made towards the initiatives the assessment team heard when it awarded the Charter Plus Standard.

2. Training for Elected Members as the Council moves towards Becoming a Strategic Commissioning Authority

- (1) Since the awarding of the Charter Plus Standard good progress has been made towards providing all elected Members with the opportunity to participate in workshops and training sessions to ensure that all Members are adequately equipped to discharge and embrace the evolving role of an elected Member in a Strategic Commissioning Authority.
- (2) Workshops have taken place in September 2014 and 2015 which were well supported by elected Members. A further series of workshops around contract management is being arranged for early in the New Year.
- (3) The work of the cross party Commissioning Advisory Board has been a fundamental mechanism in building a dialogue and relationship between Members and Officers which has been invaluable. This has led to several joint sessions of Members and officers enjoying workshop sessions.

3. Member Accreditation Scheme

- (1) The Steering Group has progressed the development of a Member Accreditation scheme. An accreditor has approved the contents of the scheme.
- (2) The next step is to develop the topics into three distinct modules:

- (a) A general module which all elected Members would be expected to complete and contains the core topics which all Members should demonstrate they have the knowledge to discharge the role of an elected Member;
 - (b) An intermediary module for those Members who aspire to be Committee Chairman and Deputy Cabinet Members; and
 - (c) An advanced module for those elected Members in a Leadership role
- (3) If the County Council are able to implement a scheme it is believed that we will be the first to introduce such a scheme to encourage prospective candidates and existing elected Members to participate in a scheme where they can leave with approved transferable skills which have been accredited.

4. Personal Development Plans

- (1) The take up of elected Members wishing to have a discussion around their Personal Development needs has been poor this year to date. This discussion does not need to take very long but is a vital component in developing the overall training plan for elected Members being prepared by colleagues in Organisation and Development as well as about tailored training for individual Members' or small groups.
- (2) The Steering Group are also exploring the development of an online form that Members can complete in confidence as an alternative to a face to face discussion.

5. KNet Members Area

- (1) The Steering Group are continuing to monitor and engage with the Members on the use of the Knet Members Area. This is a valuable resource for Members which despite the large number of hits it receives each month surveys conducted of elected Members indicate that it is not used to its full potential by the Members. This is our resource and we need to ensure the Area includes what we wish to see there and that it is friendly and accessible to use.
- (2) As the County Council starts to prepare for the County Council elections in 2017 we will be refreshing the Area to reflect what the Members have told us.

6. Thinking About Becoming a Councillor Event – Saturday 17 October

At the end of Local Democracy week on Saturday 17 October the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services and representatives of the Member Development Steering Group hosted a successful event for prospective candidates who were contemplating becoming a County Councillor or a District Councillor.

7. Induction for Elected Members in 2017

- (1) Shortly the Member Development Steering Group will be conducting a Member Survey to identify how the County Council can improve on the induction programme delivered for elected Members in 2017.
- (2) A further report on the proposed arrangements will be brought to the Committee in the second half of 2017.

8. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to note the ongoing work programme of the Member Development Steering Group.

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Background Documents: None