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## **Member Development Steering Group**

**8 March 2012**

Report of the Assistant Director, Governance & ICT

### **Remit of Member Development Steering Group**

#### **Summary**

1. This report proposes a revised remit for the Steering Group to enable it to advise on some proposed new terms of reference and a subsequent renaming of the Group.

#### **Background**

2. The Steering Group has been considering its role and how wide that should be in terms of effectively working with Democratic Services to both support and develop Members. This has arisen throughout the course of its recent work in connection with Member Development. Specifically, Members requested a report on a suggested new remit.

#### **Current Remit**

3. The current terms of reference for this Steering Group are as follows:
  - Developing and reviewing the Member Development Strategy.
  - Developing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the annual Member Development Programme.
  - Receive periodical attendance monitoring reports with a view to reporting annually to Full Council
  - Providing strong leadership and guidance to officers in respect of all Member Development issues.
  - Promoting best practice in respect of Member Development amongst all elected Members of the Council.

- Encouraging the highest level of participation by all Members in the Member Development Programme, in respect of the Strategy, and in relation to Personal Development Plans (PDPs).
  - Ensuring that the Council reaches and maintains the required level of skills, competences and practices to achieve I&DeA Charter status in connection with elected Members.
  - Reporting on a regular basis to the Standards Committee.
4. Members will recall the Group was initially set up to deal with Member Development issues and is a specific requirement for the former IdEA (now Local Government Group) Charter for Member Development, which the Council attained in September 2010. However, experiences arising from the induction process and a large intake of new elected Members resulting from the District Elections in May 2011, suggest that it might be beneficial for the Group to expand its remit to cover Members' support in general.

### **What is Member Support?**

5. The term 'Member Support' is used widely within the Council to represent what support the Council provides to Members, as administered by Democratic Services. Broadly, this covers the following areas:
- Member training and development;
  - Members allowances and expenses;
  - Equipment provided to Members (eg ICT, storage cabinets);
  - Registers of interests, gifts & hospitality and data protection;
  - Provision of local and regional information (Guide to Being a York Councillor, access to regional resources) \*

\*This will soon be complemented by the provision of an e-bulletin to Members and an interactive learning and information zone for Members (as previously reported to the Steering Group).

### **Why Change the Remit of this Group?**

6. Training and developing Members cuts across other related strands of supporting Members, such as travel and subsistence expenses associated with events and in what format learning opportunities should be provided (e-learning and whether the

provision of existing IT software is fit for purpose). Other examples of this would include:

- the provision of storage equipment to Members versus improved use of IT equipment;
  - the provision of information generally and what should be included on training to Members
7. Currently, advice can only be technically or formally sought from this Group on matters strictly related to training and development activity. As resources get tighter across the Authority and the Council strives to achieve the maximum value and efficiency for its spend, it is increasingly important to look at all areas of support to Members holistically. It would be beneficial, therefore, to widen the remit of this Group so that Members can work closely with Democratic Services on the provision of not just training but managing appropriate support packages for Members in general. As with the delivery of training and development, the Group could provide a useful interface with Members in all Groups.

### **Proposed Revised Remit for Steering Group**

8. It is suggested that the Steering Group consider adopting the following remit, as from the new Municipal Year for 2012/13, to enable it to operate more generically and provide additional support and interface to Members generally and to Democratic Services in delivery the support Members need:
- “1. To advise the Head of Civic & Democratic Services upon the provision of support to Members in accordance with the Council’s Member Development & Training Policy and its Scheme of Allowances and Entitlements to Members;*
  - 2. To liaise with Group Members where appropriate on matters affecting the provision of support to them and as considered by the Steering Group.”*
9. If the Steering Group considers it appropriate to change its remit as set out above, then, it is suggested that the name of the Steering should be updated to reflect its new activities. It is suggested that it become the **‘Member Support Steering Group’**, from the start of the new Municipal Year 2012/13.

## **Consultation**

10. This Steering Group is the Member consultative body on Member training and development related issues and as such is being consulted on proposed changes to its remit. It is suggested that Members consult their individual Groups on the proposals and report back to the Head of Civic & Democratic Services in due course.

## **Options**

11. (a) to endorse or suggest alternative changes to the future remit of the Steering Group;
- (b) to endorse the proposed change to the name of the Group, or suggest an alternative;
- (c) to make no changes to the current remit of the Steering Group

## **Council Plan 2011-15**

12. Having a Steering Group to advise upon and consider issues related to the provision of Member Support would assist the Council in equipping Members with the information, support and training they need to make and review decisions upon the key priorities set out in the Council Plan.

## **Implications**

13. There are no direct financial, legal or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report. However, it will be necessary to consider the appropriate constitutional route for having any new proposed remit for the Group subsequently endorsed.

## **Risk Management**

14. If Members choose not to review the current remit of the Steering Group, there would continue to be less of a clear opportunity for Members and Officers to work together on developing the full support and training package to Members in general.

## Recommendation

15. Members are asked to consider whether they wish to revise the remit and amend the name of the Steering Group along the lines identified in paragraphs 8 and 9 above.

## Reason

16. To enable closer cross party working with Members on all aspects related to supporting Members.

## Contact Details

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 1 March 2012

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

## Wards Affected:

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None.

## Annexes:

None