

Member Support Steering Group

14th March 2013

Report of the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

Future Approach to Member Development - 2013 Onwards

Summary

1. This report sets out a number of items for the Steering Group to give consideration to namely:
 - Future Core Training and Development Programmes
 - External Training and Development
 - Personal Development Reviews/360° Reviews
 - E-Learning Provision
 - Charter Status for Member Development
 - The Member Training and Development Policy

2. In order to prepare for the future officers are seeking guidance from this Steering Group on the items in the list above. This Group were due to receive individual reports on all of the items in the list above. As they are all interrelated they have been amalgamated into this one report.

Background

3. The draft core programme is currently one of the four key strategic elements of the Member Training and Development Policy agreed by Council in 2009.

Looking to the Future

Future Core Training and Development Programmes

4. It is suggested that a basic core training and development programme be offered for the municipal year 2013/14 and this would cover statutory and

legislative training such as planning, Licensing Act, Gambling Act, Appeals and Code of Conduct where necessary. In addition to this it would need to include any mandatory training agreed by the Council. Discussions are currently being had at Group Leader level about making scrutiny training mandatory within the Local Authority.

5. In addition to this, the Steering Group are asked to give consideration as to whether there should be any additions to the basic core programme set out above such as Corporate Parenting training (which was cancelled this year as there were very few registrations to attend), Pre-Council Briefings, Policy Cafés, visits/tours etc.
6. Finally, at their last meeting in January 2013 this group heard from the Director of Community Relations and Lifelong Learning from the Centre for Lifelong Learning about an accredited programme for Councillors that was currently in the development stage. It was envisaged that this would be split into three modules covering the following themes:
 - Civic History of York
 - Governance and the Role of the Councillor
 - Understanding Social Need
7. The course would be available as a fully accredited course, giving a certificate at undergraduate level on completion of all three modules. Alternatively component sessions of this course would also be open to Members to attend with no requirement to complete any accreditation. The course would last 12 months (but could be split across three years i.e. one module per year). The first year running from September 2013 through to 2014 would be a pilot year and would incur no cost for the Council.

External Training and Development

8. Currently a pot of money (totalling £5,000 from the overall Member Training and Development budget) is allocated per Political Group to fund external training and development outside of the Core Training and Development Programme. This Steering Group is asked to consider whether it wishes to continue this offer for the 2013/14 municipal year. However, it should be noted that as from the 2014/15 municipal year the total budget for Member Training and Development will be £5,000.

Personal Development Reviews/360° Reviews

9. At a meeting of this Steering Group in November 2012 this Group fed back on a trial of 360° Reviews that they had undertaken. The Members that had participated had mixed views of the package on offer and asked that a provider based more locally be sourced and a further trial undertaken. Work is still ongoing to find an alternative local provider. The initial suggestion of approaching the North East Regional Employers organisation has indicated that they do not know anyone in the region that uses 360° Reviews. If Members are still keen that an alternative provider be sourced then officers can continue to do some further research on this and report back at a later meeting. However Members are asked to bear in mind the cost implications of providing such a resource and the forthcoming cut (2014 onwards) to the Member Development Budget.
10. For this reason the Steering Group are advised to reconsider how and if they would like to provide Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) for Councillors in the future. The most cost effective alternative would be to bring PDRs for elected Members in-house, however when discussed within this group in 2012 this was not the preferred option.
11. There may also be an option to look at buddying and/or coaching as an alternative to the PDR process. However discussions are in the early stages and costs have not yet been established. Further discussion has indicated that there would be options to contract a trained coach to undertake the coaching session or for a member of staff to be trained in coaching skills. Discussions would also need to be had with Charter Status Assessors as to whether this would be an acceptable alternative offer to the PDR process (this is of course dependent on whether the Council decided to renew their Charter Status for Member Development – further information on this is set out in the paragraphs below).

E-Learning Provision

12. Currently the Core Training and Development Programme provides a number of e-learning opportunities for Members. These include access to the moderncouncillor online courses, child protection, disability and equality awareness online courses, the Ashridge Learning Resource Centre, Local Government Association Workbooks, ECDL and various books and CDs. The Steering Group has already indicated they would like e-learning opportunities to continue to be part of the Core Training and Development Programme; however they are now asked to identify more specifically what they would like to see.

13. Some of the offers mentioned in the paragraph above have now expired and costs would be incurred to renew memberships. In the past, via surveys and focus groups, several Members have indicated that they would like to see more e-learning on offer. However, it does not appear that many Members have accessed what has been offered on previous Core Training and Development Programmes. This could be because they were not aware of what was on offer or because what was on offer did not meet their needs. Again, a significant amount of work would need to be undertaken to make sure that what was being offered to Members met their needs and would be used; especially if provision were to incur a cost.

Charter Status for Member Development

14. The Charter Status for Member Development expires in September of this year and a decision needs to be taken as to whether to renew this. The cost of renewal would be in the region of £1,500. In addition to this renewal would require the input of a significant amount of officer time. This Steering Group are asked for their thoughts on whether this should be renewed or not.
15. Renewing the Charter Status would mean that this Authority would be giving a commitment to providing a certain standard of Member Training and Development for the next three years. There are certain things that would most likely still need to be in place to achieve this award namely, a named Member Support Officer, provision for Councillor PDRs, a Member Training and Development Policy and a Steering Group.
16. Bearing in mind officer resources to support this process, a potentially pared down core programme, an absence of a clear PDR process or viable alternative at the moment and the development of an alternative training and development offer for Members (the accredited course being developed with the Centre for Lifelong Learning) this Steering Group are asked to give guidance as to whether there is merit in renewing the Charter Status.

The Member Training and Development Policy

17. As a result of the issues identified in this report it is clear that the current Member Training and Development Policy will need updating. Initially though there are two fundamental questions to be addressed:
 - Does this Steering Group still believe the CYC training and development offer for Members should be underpinned by a formal Council Training and Development Policy

- Given the intention for a pared down Core Training and Development Programme and offer are targets for sessions appropriate or feasible any longer.
18. If the Steering Group wants to recommend a formal policy still to Council, then it is suggested that the current policy be reviewed at the next meeting of this Group. In the meantime, though, advice is specifically sought on the existence of targets.

Consultation

19. Work on the future approach to Member Development is still in its early stages and at this stage consultation is happening with this Steering Group. Once a way forward has been established further consultation will take place with both officers and external providers as required.

Options

20. Members are asked to:
- (i). Endorse the proposed approach for the 2013/14 Core Programme and offer or suggest alternations or alternatives
 - (ii). Determine whether or not to continue with Group Pot allocations to fund external activities in the municipal year 2013/14
 - (iii). Indicate their preference, if any, for a specific PDR process
 - (iv). Indicate what E-Learning provision they would like to see for 2013/14
 - (v). Indicate whether they wish to renew the Charter Status or not
 - (vi). Indicate if they would like to retain a formal Member Training and Development Policy or not

Analysis

21. Much of the analysis of the issues needing to be discussed is contained within the paragraphs above. The Steering Group may also want to take into consideration another item on today's agenda namely; *'Evaluation Report on the Core Training Programme (1st September 2012 to 28th February 2013'* and the take-up of events during that period to assist them in considering the pros and cons of any extras they might wish to add to the Core Training and Development Programme proposed in the paragraphs above.

Council Plan 2011-2015

22. Having well informed and trained Members will help the Council deliver its key priorities set out within the Council Plan 2011-15.

Implications

23. **Financial** – Any financial costs associated with the core programme 2012/13 will need to be met from the existing budgets available for Member Development. The majority of sessions proposed for the programme set out above could be provided in-house and would therefore, not incur any costs. The first year of the accredited course being developed in conjunction with the Centre for Lifelong Learning is a pilot year and as such will be free.
24. Dependent on what Members agree should be included in the programme costs could be incurred for any external training identified, PDRs and the renewal of the Charter Status for Member Development.
25. **Human Resources** – Preparing and supporting a comprehensive Core Training and Development Programme takes up a significant amount of officer time. Members are asked to bear this in mind when considering what, if any, extras they wish to add into the proposed basic Core Programme as set out in the body of this report.
26. There are no known Legal, Equalities or other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Risk Management

27. If the Steering Group considers that Charter Status is no longer appropriate there is a risk that the Local Authority will no longer be publically recognised as delivering core training and development to a standard guaranteed by this award.

Recommendations

28. It is recommended that Members:
 - (i). Endorse the proposed approach for the 2013/14 Core Programme and offer
 - (ii). Determine whether or not to continue with Group Pot allocations to fund external activities in the municipal year 2013/14
 - (iii). Indicate their preference, if any, for a specific PDR process

- (iv). Indicate what E-Learning provision they would like to see for 2013/14
- (v). Indicate whether they wish to renew the Charter Status or not
- (vi). Indicate if they would like to retain a formal Member Training and Development Policy or not

Reason: To enable the delivery of future support to Members.

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**Report
Approved**

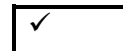


Date 07.03.2013

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

None