

Member Support Steering Group

1 July 2013

Report of the Assistant Director: Governance & ICT

Review of Member Training & Development Policy

Summary

1. This report reviews the current Member Training & Development Policy in light of new approaches adopted towards training and developing Members for 2013/14 and beyond.

Background

2. In 2009, the Council adopted a formal Member Training & Development Policy, setting out its commitment to provide Members with the skills, knowledge and learning they need to undertake their various roles, when elected to the Council. That policy is subject to annual review.
3. Since the last review in 2011, this Steering Group has instigated a number of changes in the way the Council provides training for Members and in both how that is evaluated and monitored. As a result, a more detailed review of the existing policy is required.

Consultation

4. This Steering Group is the consultative body on matters relating to support and training and development for Members. As such it is asked to advise the Deputy Leader on such issues and in this case, specifically, recommend any proposed changes to the policy to Full Council.

Reviewing the Policy – Changes in Provision

5. In May 2012, this Steering Group was given a new wider remit to enable it to advise upon all matters which concerned the provision of support to Members and not just training and development. This change has enabled the Group to take into account the wider

resource issues affecting the provision of that support and to appreciate the links between issues.

6. Then, in March this year, the Steering Group took a decision not to seek to renew the Council's Charter status for Member Development, on the basis of the current resources available to support the work required and of the actual perceived benefits and value added from putting some of the required initiatives in place, eg a formal personal development planning for Members.
7. Having taken a collective view not to seek renewal of Charter status, the Steering Group then decided not to offer PDPs (Personal Development Plans) to Members, as provided by an external consultant since 2009. In coming to this view, Members took into account the expense of engaging an external consultant, the number of Members actually completing the process and the value placed on their experience by Members.
8. At that same meeting in March this year, Members also reached the conclusion that, in light of their decision not to seek Charter renewal, setting targets for Members to achieve in relation to training was no longer beneficial and indeed, could be counterproductive.
9. As part of the Council's budget setting exercise, in February 2013, Budget Council decided to reduce the annual base budget available for developing Members to £5k, as from 2014/15. In turn, this has led this Group to start looking to the future and to focus on providing a core programme of compulsory (statutory) or essential (to the Council, in achieving its ambitions) training, supplemented by a cost effective means for Members to obtain other key skills or knowledge central to their role. In response to the latter, an optional accredited certificate in 'Local Government & Democracy' has been developed, in partnership with the University of York. Details of this Certificate have been provided in the Core Training Programme for Members released prior to publication of this agenda.
10. Again mindful of tightening resources, this Group has commissioned a new 'App' for Members, downloadable in different formats, to make it easier for Members to access all the relevant information they need as an elected Member. This has great potential for Members to be encouraged to share information with colleagues arising from conferences or events they have attended.

It is an excellent platform from which to share learning as well as information.

11. In an effort to reflect the changes to approach referred to in paragraphs 5-10 above, a revised policy on Member Training & Development is attached to this report at Annex A. The proposed changes, for Members' consideration, are shown as tracked changes for ease of comparison with the existing policy.

Options

12. Members can choose to propose to Council some, all or none of the changes to the attached Training & Development Policy for Members. Alternatively, Members can suggest other changes for consideration.

Council Plan 2011-2015

13. Having a Member Training & Development Policy adopted by Council, demonstrates the Council's commitment to providing its elected Members with the skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles and to making key decisions affecting the communities they represent.

Implications

14. **Financial** – There are no known financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.
15. There are no known HR, legal or other implications associated with the contents of this report.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy there are no risks associated with the contents of this report, other than not reviewing and updating a Council Policy to ensure it is in line with current working practices.

Recommendations

17. The Steering Group are requested to review the Training & Development Policy, as proposed at Annex A, and recommend the appropriate changes to Council.

Reason: In order to ensure that the Council Policy remains fit for purpose and reflects new working practices and commitments.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 21.06.2013

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Current Training & Development Policy for Members

Annexes

Annex A Proposed Revised Training & Development Policy for Members