

Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny (Internal) Committee**  
Date: **19 July 2016**  
Title: **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP –  
PROGRESS UPDATE AND INDUCTION REVIEW**  
Portfolio Area: **Strategy & Commissioning**  
Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:  
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or  
implementation of substantive decision)

**The Committee  
recommendations  
will be presented  
to the Hub  
Committee  
meeting on 13  
September 2016**

Author: **Darryl White (on  
behalf of the  
Member  
Development  
Steering Group)**

Contacts: Cllr Kevin Ball (Chairman of the Member Development  
Steering Group) [Cllr.kevin.ball@westdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.kevin.ball@westdevon.gov.uk) and  
Darryl White (Senior Specialist – Democratic Services)  
[darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk)

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Hub Committee be RECOMMENDED to:-**

- 1. Note the progress made by the Steering Group to date;**
- 2. Approve the future Member Induction Programme (as attached at Appendix A), subject to delegated authority being granted to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services, in consultation with the Member Development Steering Group and Group Leaders, to make any necessary minor amendments;**

3. **approve the principle of a Member Learning and Development Plan, with responsibility for its content and monitoring being delegated to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services, in consultation with the Member Development Steering Group; and**
4. **pursue the South West Charter Status for Member Development accreditation.**

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Member Development Steering Group has undertaken a detailed review into the May 2015 Member Induction Programme. As part of this review, the Group has canvassed all Members of the Council and has made a series of suggested revisions for inclusion in any future Induction Programme;
- 1.2 Since this piece of work has been completed, the Steering Group fully recognises that ongoing development of Members is a key element of the organisational development of the Council. Therefore, the Steering Group is now seeking to turn its attention to the creation of a Member Learning and Development Plan;
- 1.3 As a further corporate commitment to the importance of Member Development, this report is also seeking support to pursue the South West Charter Status for the Member Development accreditation.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 At Annual Council in May 2015, the Council established a Member Development Steering Group and appointed Cllrs Ball, Cheadle, Leech, Samuel and Yelland to serve on it. The Group itself subsequently appointed Cllr Ball as its Chairman;
- 2.2 The primary purpose of the Steering Group is to take a strategic lead on all matters relating to Member Learning and Development to ensure that they are meeting both individual Member and corporate needs;
- 2.3 Since its establishment, the Group has met on a number of occasions and has periodically updated the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee on its progress;
- 2.4 The Group has now reached a point where it is in a position to make a number of formal recommendations.

### **3. Member Development Steering Group Deliberations**

#### **3.1 Member Induction Programme**

3.1.1 Immediately from the offset of the first Steering Group meeting, it was apparent that a number of Members (both returning and new) had concerns over elements of the most recent (May 2015) Member Induction Programme;

3.1.2 Whilst recognising that the timing of the Programme was unfortunate (e.g. it fell right in the middle of both the new Senior Leadership Team being established and Phase 1b of the Transformation Programme recruitment process), there were nonetheless felt to be a number of improvements that could be made for the future;

3.1.3 In light of the expressed concerns and, to enable all Members the opportunity to have their say in the induction process, a questionnaire was sent to all Members that asked the following questions:

- Could you please give positive and negative experiences of the recent Member Induction process?
- What training and development opportunities would you like to be delivered to help you:
  - (a) Within your current role(s);
  - (b) In any future challenges that you can foresee facing the Council?
- Please give examples of the hard skills that you believe you have (e.g. IT and Finance);
- Please give examples of the soft skills that you believe you have (e.g. management and communication skills); and
- Are there any particular Council roles that you aspire to be appointed to in the future?

3.1.4 The results of this questionnaire were evaluated by the Steering Group and, coupled with consultation with the two Group Leaders, has resulted in a revised Member Induction Programme being created, which is as attached at Appendix A;

3.1.5 In recommending approval of the revised Programme, the Steering Group recognises that external factors (e.g. changing legislation) may require the content to be amended over time. As a consequence, delegated authority is requested to be granted to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services, in consultation with the Steering Group and Group Leaders, to make any necessary minor amendments prior to the Programme taking place.

## **3.2 Member Learning and Development Plan**

3.2.1 There is a recognition that in the demanding and fast changing environment of local government, Members more than ever before, have a responsibility to make sure that they get access to the ongoing training opportunities that they need to serve their constituents;

As a consequence, it has been proposed that a corporate Member Learning and Development Plan should be produced that:

- ensures that all Members have the opportunities to develop; and
- provides Members with the professional skills that they need to carry out their role as an elected representative.

3.2.2 Whilst the Council's current approach to Member Learning and Development is somewhat ad-hoc, the need for a corporate Plan to be adopted is recognised. It is therefore suggested that the next key work strand for the Steering Group should be the production of a corporate Member Learning and Development Plan.

## **3.3 South West Charter Status for Member Development**

3.3.1 The South West Charter for Member Development has been developed by South West Councils, in partnership with the Local Government Association. The Charter is a recognised standard that supports Councils to adopt a structured approach to Member Development and Support and to build elected Member capacity;

3.3.2 The South West Charter for Member Development has four key principles:

- Commitment to Member Development;
- Strategic approach to Member Development;
- That learning and development is effective in building capacity; and
- Effective Member support.

3.3.3 If the Council decides to sign up to the Charter, then it will be demonstrating its commitment to supporting and developing its elected Members, in line with what is recognised as good practice;

3.3.4 With regard to the resource implications of pursuing this accreditation, these are considered to be minimal. The Devon and Somerset Shared Member Development Officer has already led a number of partner authorities through the steps to achieve the Charter accreditation and is well versed in the process. Furthermore, the criteria which needs to be demonstrated during the assessment process is already being undertaken and implemented through the Devon and Somerset partnership;

3.3.5 It is therefore recommended that it would be a worthwhile exercise for the Council to pursue the Charter accreditation.

#### 4. Implications

Legal/Governance		<p>There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.</p> <p>However, reference to the importance of Member training is frequent in the Council Constitution. For example, a Member needs to have undergone relevant Chairmanship training before they can Chair a Committee meeting and a Member must have received Planning and Licensing related training before they can serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee.</p>
Financial		<p>Whilst it is anticipated that most Member Learning and Development sessions will be conducted in-house, there is a Member Training budget of £5,000 per annum and the cost of the Learning and Development Plan will not exceed this budget.</p>
Risk		<p>The key risks arising from this report relate to the failure to provide adequate training, development and / or support to Members. The result of this key risk not being properly addressed could reduce the effectiveness of Members in their role and ultimately the democratic decision-making process, which is likely to harm the Council's relationship with its communities and the reputation of the Council and individual Members.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		<p>There are no equality and diversity implications directly related to this report. However, it is important that both the Induction Programme and Learning and Development Plan include specific and adequate training on the Council's responsibilities in respect of equality and diversity.</p>
Safeguarding		<p>There are no safeguarding implications directly related to this report.</p>
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		<p>There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications directly related to this report.</p>
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		<p>There are no health, safety and wellbeing implications directly related to this report.</p>
Other implications		N/A

## **Supporting Information**

### **Appendices:**

A. Draft future Member Induction Programme.

### **Background Papers:**

The Council Constitution;

The Member Development Questionnaire; and

Copies of the Member Development Steering Group agendas and minutes.