

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio
Holder's Meeting

18 October 2012

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Corporate Services) / Legal and Democratic Services
Manager

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Purpose

1. To update the Portfolio Holder on the Member Development Programme for 2012/13 and agree the process for collating information to inform the preparation of the Member Development Programme for 2013/14.
2. This is not a key decision, but has been brought before the Portfolio Holder to ensure that the Member Development Programme for 2013/14 will reflect the training needs of members and is agreed within an appropriate timescale.

Recommendations

3. That the Portfolio Holder agrees that a questionnaire should be sent to all Councillors asking them about their training needs in order to update/create Personal Development Plans for all councillors. The resulting data will then be collated and used to inform the Member Development Programme for 2013/14.

Considerations

4. South Cambridgeshire District Council was awarded Quality Charter Status for excellence in Elected Member Development on 24 January 2012. The Council's charter status will last for three years from the award date and the Council will receive an eighteen-month follow up call around July 2013 from the assessment team to determine if it is continuing to meet the Charter requirements and has been implementing the recommended actions. South East Employers will want to contact the lead officer and at least two Councillors on this follow-up call.
5. The assessment team's report stated the following:
 - it is members and not officers who determine which member learning activities are offered by the Council.
 - officers' roles are to act as facilitators that listen to member feedback and adapt their approaches and methodology in the light of this.
 - Learning needs are identified via individual and collective development needs analyses using a structured approach to Personal Development Planning (PDP) and interviews that are used to inform the training programme.
6. It is concluded that the use of questionnaires and interviews to inform the training programme is considered to be good practice by the assessors.
7. The challenge is to offer a training programme that will not only meet the needs of those councillors who have asked for particular training but also attract those members who have not taken up the offer of training opportunities recently in order to ensure that members from across the whole council are having their development

needs met. At the end of the second quarter there are 14 councillors who have not yet attended any training course for 2012/13.

8. The training programme for 2012/13 is attached at **Appendix A**. It should be noted that approximately £1,500 remains uncommitted for the year. Details of the funds remaining in the Budget are shown at **Appendix B**.
9. If a Councillor requests training which is not on the agreed member training programme, he or she will need their request to be signed off by the Portfolio Holder. There is an expectation that the councillor will write a short report on the training course and will keep copies of any hand-outs distributed at the meeting. This information will be put on the intranet where it can be viewed by other councillors.
10. The Member Development Programme for 2013/14 will need to be considered by Cabinet on 11 April 2013 at the latest. Prior to this it will be reviewed by Executive Management Team to ensure that it links to the Council's objectives and can deliver joint training to members and officers where appropriate.
11. The Constitution states that members are not "eligible to sit on a regulatory committee unless and until they have undertaken suitable training upon appointment to such a committee. No member shall be eligible to remain on a regulatory committee unless and until they have undertaken suitable refresher training as and when identified by the relevant Director." Due to legislation changes in November 2012 and April 2013, all members of the Licensing Committee for 2013/14 will be expected to attend update training. Employment and Planning Committee training will need to be scheduled for those who wish to sit on the Committee, but did not have training in 2012.

Options

Option 1

12. To send out a questionnaire to all Councillors asking them about their training needs and then follow this up with a personal development plan. The resulting data would be collated and used to inform the Member Development Programme for 2013/14.

Option 2

13. Using existing data to shape the Member Development Programme for 2013/14, on the basis that flexibility exists to organise additional training on request.

Implications

14. Financial	The Member Training Budget for 2012/13 is £5,000. £2,500 has already been spent and a further £1,000 has been committed. This leaves £1,500 still to be spent.
Legal	None.
Staffing	None.
Risk Management	None.
Equality and Diversity	None.
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No. Information update only.
Climate Change	None.

Consultations

15. None.

Consultation with Children and Young People

16. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

17. The Council's long-term vision includes as Action A2: "Invest in employees and members by carrying out actions in the Organisational and Member Development strategies".

Conclusions / Summary

18. The Council has been recognised with a national award for excellence in member development. The challenge ahead is to ensure that the Council continues to meet the Charter's requirements and to maintain the momentum in this area. It would be less resource-intensive to option 2 and shape the Member Development Programme 2013/14 on existing data but there would be an associated risk that the South East Employers Assessors would consider that the Council's development plan was no longer member-led and that the authority was no longer meeting the Charter's requirements. Option 1 is therefore recommended.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Member Development Strategy 2011-2014

East of England Charter for Elected Member Development Assessment Report

Contact Officer: Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713408