

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Cabinet  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director, Corporate Services

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### MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2013/14

#### Purpose

1. This report sets out the proposed Member Development Programme for 2013/14. This is not a key decision but has been submitted to Cabinet at the request of the Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder. It was first published in the November 2012 forward plan.

#### Recommendation

2. That the 2013/14 Member Development Programme be adopted.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

3. To ensure that the programme addresses Members' development needs and is relevant to the Council's business cycle. It also provides Cabinet with an opportunity to demonstrate its support for the concept of member development.

#### Background

4. The Council committed to achieving Charter Status for Elected Member Development on 11 November 2010 and adopted the Member Development Strategy 2011-14 on 14 April 2011. The Member Development Task and Finish Group, having led the Council through its successful achievement of Charter Status on 24 January 2012, has now disbanded.

#### Considerations

5. The proposed Member Development Programme at **Appendix A** to this report has been developed based on the training and briefing events held during 2012/13, development needs identified by Members through their Personal Development Plans and the forward programme of regular business items considered by the Council each year. It incorporates recommendations made by the Executive Management Team and the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) Assessment Team which awarded Charter Status.
6. Where appropriate, joint training with other partner authorities in the Cambridgeshire Member Development Network and with parish councils will be encouraged to minimise costs and maximise attendance. In particular, opportunities for joint training will be sought for regulatory committee training at the beginning of each municipal year for programmes relating to issues common to all authorities and "soft skills" courses such as speed reading and public speaking.

7. Many dates are indicative at this stage, particularly for those matters where further legislation is awaited. Since April 2012 Democratic Services has been publishing a training newsletter for Councillors including final dates and further details of each event. Details of all training events are also published in the Weekly Bulletin.
8. Cabinet Members are currently working towards a pilot scheme known as Top Team Development, supported by the Local Government Association, Improvement East and the Office for Public Management. This initiative seeks to develop the capability of the shared team of Cabinet and Executive Management Team to tackle the challenging financial environment in the future and should be complete by the end of March 2013.

### **Options**

9. To adopt as actions, or to add to the development programme, any of the following recommendations of the EELGA Charter Status assessment report, which includes development needs identified by Councillors interviewed as part of the assessment visit. Cabinet might wish to adopt some of the recommendations as actions at this time, or to form a view on which should take priority:
  - (a) Deliver suitable training in response to the Localism Act and the Open Public Services White Paper;
  - (b) Encourage the use of member development as a succession planning tool for members by exploring succession planning needs and proposed methods for meeting those needs with each political group;
  - (c) Ensure that development priorities support and enable the new corporate and strategic priorities;
  - (d) Include a community impact assessment as part of the Council's member development evaluation strategy, with feedback from partner organisations to improve the organisational level impact of development;
  - (e) Consideration should be given to taking a county-wide approach to sharing key development needs and using the Cambridgeshire Member Development Network to produce a county-wide development programme;
  - (f) Asking each Member to submit an annual report to their Group Leader or to full Council, or for publication on the Council's website, in order to detail their involvement in development activities each municipal year;
  - (g) Development of a formal member mentoring programme to complement the buddy system, particularly to support new members throughout the first term of office. This could be developed internally or on a county-wide level as part of the Cambridgeshire Member Development Network, and should include support and development opportunities for both the mentors and "mentees";
  - (h) Further training on the use of social media, specifically focusing on the risks and pitfalls to be aware of when using social media to comment on council business and / or issues not directly related to the council;
  - (i) Further development of e-learning tools to complement the member development programme and to recognise the different learning styles of members; and
  - (j) Provide support and development that focus on community engagement work, casework and surgeries.

## Implications

10.	Financial	<p>The 2013/14 budget for member training is £5,300. This is complemented by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1,700 in the Licensing service budget to fund Licensing Committee training</li> <li>• Up to £5,000 for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee (this budget funds all the Committee's activities, including training and development, and also facilities hire, catering, use of expert witnesses, etc.)</li> <li>• Up to £15,000 for the Civic Affairs Committee budget (as with the Scrutiny and Overview Committee budget, this is the Committee's overall budget which needs to fund the delivery of training and development for District and Parish Councillors alongside funding the cost of external investigations and hearing costs relating to complaints)</li> <li>• £20,000 provided by the Council's insurers to deliver risk management and insurance training to both members and officers. This money cannot be transferred for use on other training topics, or to hire other training providers.</li> </ul> <p>The member training budget was fully committed in 2012/13.</p> <p>Cabinet Members' attendance at conferences and training events relating to their portfolio subject were previously funded from each portfolio budget, but now must be funded from within the overall member training budget.</p> <p>Where joint training is held with officers, costs incurred will be divided between the member and officer training budgets.</p>
	Legal	The Council's Constitution requires that all members and substitute members on regulatory bodies (Employment, Licensing, Planning) receive training before they are able to serve on that body.
	Staffing	None specific other than the demands on officer time to prepare and deliver training.
	Risk Management	None specific.
	Equality and Diversity	None specific.
	Equality Impact Assessment completed	<p>No.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment relating to the timing of Council meetings informs the scheduling of all events, including training and development.</p>
	Climate Change	Where possible, training events are scheduled to coincide with committee meetings to minimise the number of car journeys to and from the Council offices. Members are also issued an optional pre-meeting questionnaire which asks if they are able to car share and the Member Services Officer undertakes to find car sharing arrangements with other confirmed attendees.

## **Consultations**

11. The Executive Management Team has been consulted and the Cambridgeshire Member Development Network will be consulted following Cabinet approval of the programme to organise joint training events, where appropriate. The Network has already been contacted about joint training for regulatory committees in late May or early June 2013.

### **Consultation with Children and Young People**

12. None: not relevant.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

13. The proposed programme supports the aim of being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all. A clear and comprehensive training programme benefits the community through high quality and effective local governance and through Councillors gaining increased knowledge and skills to enable them to better carry out their role. Achievement of the Member Development Charter was an identified Council action for 2012/13 and supports Council investment in its employees and Members.

### **Conclusions / Summary**

14. The Council has made great progress in member development over the past few years and it can now build on this work through adopting an annual training programme.

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

Member Development Strategy 2011-2014

East of England Local Government Association: Charter for Elected Member Development Assessment Report 24 January 2012

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