

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM 13**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2007**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**COUNCIL DECISION/CABINET DECISION**

**Corporate and Social Inclusion – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Terry Laing**

**REVIEW OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR MEMBERS**

1. Summary

To update Cabinet on issues related to the Council's Learning and Development Strategy for Members (LDSM), following its previous presentation to the Members Advisory Panel, and its approval by Council in January 2007.

2. Recommendations

1. The timescale and format for future Induction programmes be extended to cover 'your first 100 days as a Councillor' which will allow for flexibility and follow up induction sessions.
2. Planning training continue to be provided as detailed in paragraph 7 each year, supplemented by in house training as required throughout the year to support the committees ongoing requirements.
3. Licensing training continue to be provided as detailed in paragraph 11 each year, supplemented by in house training as required throughout the year to support the committees ongoing requirements.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Learning and Development Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2007. This report details progress made against the Strategy.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**SUMMARY**

To update Cabinet on issues related to the Council's Learning and Development Strategy for Members (LDSM), following its previous presentation to the Members Advisory Panel, and its approval by Council in January 2007.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The timescale and format for future Induction programmes be extended to cover 'your first 100 days as a Councillor' which will allow for flexibility and follow up induction sessions.
2. Planning training continue to be provided as detailed in paragraph 7 each year, supplemented by in house training as required throughout the year to support the committees ongoing requirements.
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**DETAIL**

**Induction Training**

1. All Elected Members had been advised of the content of the Induction Programme; which had been agreed previously following consultation with new members that had been elected in 2005; and who had given feedback on the content of the programme delivered then. All prospective candidates for the May 2007 elections were issued with advance notification of the Induction Programme, which detailed times, dates, venues and content of the full Induction Programme
2. All Members were provided with an induction pack which included copies of the presentations used and 3 support discs which detailed presentation speaker notes where provided, a Guide to Member Roles and a Members Handbook introducing members to the Council.
3. Evaluation forms were completed by Members, some very positive comments were received in relation to the package as a whole, the support discs and the walk-about sessions in which it was felt that knowing people and places was invaluable to the Member

role. The evaluation also provided insight for future induction programmes as it was felt that perhaps the programme was intense in terms of timing and content and that members were overawed by the complexity and diversity of the Authority.

**Recommended that** the timescale and format for future Induction programmes be extended to cover 'your first 100 days as a Councillor' which will allow for flexibility and follow up induction sessions.

### **Planning Training**

4. A one day planning training course was provided in which all elected Members of the Council were invited to attend. Attendance at the course was mandatory for all those Members and proposed substitutes for the Planning Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/8. A total of 29 Members have received the training, which includes all members of the Planning Committee.
5. The course was intended for Councillors involved in planning and covered the basic policy and procedural aspects of the UK planning system. It provided an introduction and an overview for the benefit of any Councillors involved/interested in the topic. It was specifically arranged for the authority by Trevor Roberts Associates, the leading specialists in training for Councillors involved or interested in planning. Although the focus was on development control, the aspect of planning with which most Councillors have most contact, it did cover other important elements as well as providing a crucial general context/framework so that Councillors could see where they fit into the overall picture.
6. Feedback from the session was that it provided an excellent insight into the planning process, very informative and interactive.
7. An additional 2 sessions have been held in respect of Probity, in total 17 Members have attended, 11 Planning Committee members and 6 non Planning Committee members. A further session has been arranged and will be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2007.

**Recommended that** Planning training continue to be provided on this basis each year, supplemented by in house training as required throughout the year to support the committees ongoing requirements.

### **Licensing Training**

8. A one day licensing training course was provided in which all elected Members of the Council were invited to attend. Attendance at the course was mandatory for all those Members and proposed substitutes for the Licensing Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/8. A total of 18 Members have received the training, which includes all members of the Licensing Committee.
9. The course was intended for Councillors involved in Licensing and covered the Committee process, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing and The Licensing Act 2003/Gambling Act 2005. The course was arranged for the Authority by Roger Butterfield, a former solicitor to Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council, specialising in licensing, and a highly experienced trainer and lecturer in the general field of licensing.
10. Feedback from the session revealed that it provided a very informative insight to the Licensing process.

**Recommended that** Licensing training continue to be provided on this basis each year, supplemented by in house training as required throughout the year to support the committees ongoing requirements.

## Employee Appeal Panel-Training

11. Specialist training was also provided by the Arbitration Conciliatory Advice Service (ACAS) on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 to members of the Employee Appeals Panel regarding an understanding of the requirements of the statutory discipline and grievance process; how to conduct a fair hearing; principles of natural justice; and other factors regarding dispute resolution rules.

## Personal Support Plans

12. A Member's role is a demanding one, and it is important that a range of support resources is available to assist in fulfilling this role. Over the past 12 months Democratic Services have been working with Human Resources to produce a Members In-house Support and Development programme, which compliments the document 'A Guide to Member Roles'. Where in-house provision cannot be met external provision will be sourced.
13. As part of the Councils on-going commitment to Member Learning and Development and progress against the North East Charter for Elected Member Development, we have secured funding from the North East Improvement Partnership's Capacity Building Fund to provide one-to-one Personal Support sessions with Members, which seek to identify any training, development need or support that members require to carry out their roles effectively.
14. Personal Support Sessions have been completed with Members during the month of June, using this funding. To date 47 elected Members have undertaken the one-to-one Personal Support sessions, using 'The Guide to Member Roles' as a basis for assessing and identifying support needs. It is now proposed that a similar opportunity to undertake Personal Support Plan sessions be extended to the Council's Co-opted Members; including those represented on the Standards Committee.
15. A matrix of learning needs has subsequently been developed as a result of the feedback received from the initial sessions, which identifies specific development needs and preferred learning styles which will be used when determining training and support opportunities for members. **Appendix 1** profiles this need. The next objective will be to source and deliver such support, over the coming year, to a standard which demonstrates best practice and encourages all Members to reach their potential and thus continue to build leadership capacity within the Authority. Regular update reports will be presented to meetings of the Members Advisory Panel and Standards Committee.
16. The in-house Members Support and Development Programme identifies support resources for most skills identified for member roles. It has been recognised that members will require a variety of support opportunities and so the programme offers a range of different methods to meet members' preferences.
17. Members are encouraged to share their learning with others, and reports have already been received giving feedback on attendance at the last Licensing conference, similar reports are also expected from the recent Housing conference. On completion of any Learning & Development activity Members are asked to complete an evaluation form to assess the impact, effectiveness and suitability of the activity to ensure that the support is meeting the need and that it is an effective use of resources.
18. A Member Learning and Development database is also being developed which will support the delivery of Member Training and Support. For example Course Packs will be signposted on the database which will allow the sharing of learning from events with other members. It will also enable Members to view internal and external support resources to assist members with their Personal Support requirements.

### **Charter for Elected Member Development**

19. Cabinet at its meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2006 agreed to the Authority signing up for the North East Charter for Elected Member Development. Since this time, Democratic Services have been working to improve the approach to providing development and support to Elected Members in order to deliver an excellent service for our Elected Members and achieve Chartered Status.
20. It is expected that an assessment will be carried out in September 2007 by NEREO. To ascertain our progress made to date against this Charter, a recent progress check with Eleanor Hayward from NEREO shows that we have made excellent progress and that we are on track for achieving Chartered Status.

### **Mentoring**

21. Once again, Democratic Services have been successful in obtaining funding from the North East Improvement Partnership for Elected Member Development, this time for the purpose of delivering a Councillor Mentoring Programme supported by the IDeA. Initial discussions have been held with the IDeA based on the Council's unique power sharing administration, and as a consequence of this, and a follow up to this Council's participation on the IDeA Leadership Programme, eight elected members have been invited to participate in the programme for 2007/2008. The programme commences in September 2007; and it is hoped that the experience of this programme can be built upon thereafter when developing for consideration an in house programme of mentor support.

### **Leadership Academy**

22. As part of member development within a leadership role, 4 elected members have up to now taken part in the IDeA's Leadership Programme. Positive feedback from the programme has been received, 2 of those 4 members will now supplement this activity by participating in the aforementioned Mentoring Programme. A further two members have now been identified for participation in the Leadership Academy programme during 2007/8 as a consequence of taking up new executive responsibilities.

### **Conclusion**

23. The Learning and Development Strategy recognises that Members have a variety of different roles to fulfil with numerous demands placed on their time and therefore they require flexible learning and support opportunities tailored to their specific circumstances.
24. Democratic Services have so far identified (and produced on behalf of the North East Region) a Guide to Member Roles clarifying the skills required for each role. The value of this guide has been recognised regionally via the North East Improvement Partnership and nationally by the Municipal Journal who commended the Guide to Member Roles in the Councillor Development Achievement of the Year category of the recent MJ Local Government Achievement Awards.
25. The emphasis placed within the strategy of identifying what support members need through the personal support planning process means that individual needs and preferences will be identified. The successful bid for Capacity Building Fund money to provide one-to-one Personal Support sessions with Members has resulted in 48 Members, to date, having completed their Personal Support Session, using 'The Guide to Member Roles' as a basis for assessing and identifying support needs. The next objective will be to source and deliver such support, over the coming year, to a standard which demonstrates best practice and encourages all Members to reach their potential and thus continue to build leadership capacity within the Authority.

26. Initial funding received from the North East Improvement Partnership for Elected Member Development for delivering a Councillor Mentoring Programme supported by the IDeA will allow Democratic Services to offer further support to members through mentor support. The continued funding from the Capacity Building Fund for participation in the 2007/8 Leadership Academy Programme will allow for further development of leadership capacity within the authority.
27. Significant progress has been made in enhancing the approach to Member Learning and Development and we expect this to be confirmed by the external accreditation process for Chartered Status.

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

28. There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report. The existing Members Training Budget is set at £13,500.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

29. The review of the Learning and Development Strategy is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

30. The review of the Learning and Development Strategy seeks to improve civic renewal within the Liveability Partnership. Reviewing the Strategy will continue to support members fully in building capacity and identify the key skills and support required for members to fulfil their roles to the fullest.

## **CONSULTATION**

31. This report has been presented to the Members Advisory Panel and the Standards Committee and will be submitted to Council.

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Background Papers:

Reports to Cabinet – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2006, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Reports to Members Advisory Panel – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2006, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Reports to Standards Committee - 7 December 2006 and 20 February 2007

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

N/A

Property Implications:

N/A