

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**17 FEBRUARY 2011**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION/COUNCIL DECISION**

**Corporate Management and Finance – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Laing**

#### **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR ELECTED MEMBERS 2011 - 2015**

1. Summary

The report presents the revised Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members highlighting the journey Elected Member Development has made since the original Learning and Development Strategy was agreed in 2006 and details the achievements gained since the authority was awarded Charter Status in 2007.

2. Recommendations

That the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members 2011-2015 be approved.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To refresh the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members post Local Government Elections 2011.

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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**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR ELECTED MEMBERS 2011 - 2015**

**SUMMARY**

The report presents the revised Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members highlighting the journey Elected Member Development has made since the original Learning and Development Strategy was agreed in 2006 and details the achievements gained since the authority was awarded Charter Status in 2007.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members 2011-2015 be approved.

**DETAIL**

1. The Council recognises that Elected Member Learning and Development is integral to achieving the Authorities strategic objectives, delivery of high quality services and to meet the constitutional requirements of the Council. In order to ensure that the Authority continues to build upon its successful approach to Member Development and seeks to continually improve, the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members has been refreshed and is attached at **Appendix 1** for your information.
2. The Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members highlights a variety of Learning and Development opportunities, whilst recognising that Members have numerous demands on their time which result in the need for flexible learning opportunities tailored to their specific circumstances. The emphasis on personal support planning means that individual needs and preferences are also addressed, which builds on existing skills and knowledge.
3. Since the approval of the first Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members in 2006, the following Member Development achievements have been afforded to the Authority:-
  - 2007 MJ Awards – Role Guides commended
  - 2007 Achievement of the North East Charter for Elected Member Development
  - 2007 CPA notable Best Practice for work with Elected Members
  - 2008 APSE finalists
  - 2009 APSE Winners
  - 2010 Care Quality Commission Service Inspection of Adult Social Care – Impressive work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committees which had secured better services

4. The 'Emember Support System', a bespoke purpose built system providing a remote means of access for members who wish to use the facility on-line to self assess their learning requirements was also developed. The system gives members the facility to complete an on-line self assessment based on their roles and subsequently identifies any Learning and Development needs. It is designed so that members can undergo self assessments at a time to suit themselves whilst also offering the 1-2-1 Support session with the Member Development Officer guiding them through the process. A function of the system is the ability to record securely members support needs, linked to a library of resources available both internally and externally, with the ability to chart progress in meeting members identified need. The system also maintains a record of training/support provided; with opportunity for members to submit feedback helpful in evaluating the suitability and success of the choice of resource offered.
5. It is a requirement for all members serving on the Planning and Licensing Committees and the Employee Appeals Panel to receive formal training in relevant procedures and law on an annual basis in order to be eligible to continue to serve as a member of that Committee/Panel. Any new member to the Committee/Panel receives an introduction to the work of the Committee/Panel. All members are also invited to participate in any additional training/soundbite sessions covering new areas of policy, procedure and Legislation as it is introduced throughout the year.
6. Mechanisms have been put in place to encourage attendance by Members at Learning and Development Opportunities. CMT agree a forward plan of Topics to be addressed at the Members Policy Update Seminars. Details of these, Meetings and other events are now put into Members Outlook Calendars as well as the Democracy Diary, this practice will continue.
7. A major part of the refresh of the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members is the revised Induction Programme for members which will take place following the Local Government Elections in May 2011. The content of the Induction programme was agreed at CMT on 1st November and 13th December 2010 respectively. Work is ongoing with Departments to establish the content of the Induction Programme and Market Place Events. Details of the revised Induction Programme is attached at **Appendix 2**.
8. The revised 2011 Induction is a less intense programme than that provided in 2007. To accompany this, it has been agreed by CMT that a 'Democratic Services Open Day' be held, which would enable new Members to meet the Team, enable them to complete interest forms, introduce them to the E-Member Support System giving them the opportunity to undertake their on-line Personal Support Plan to identify additional Learning and Development needs, discuss initial ICT setup, be issued with ID badges, complete CRB forms, obtain car parking passes and other general house keeping duties. A Market Place event will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> May and repeated on 23<sup>rd</sup> May which will enable members to find out about all the Service Areas of the Council and meet Officers and exchange information. We also plan to refresh the Members Handbook to incorporate Ward Profile information and a Survival Guide which would include some of the more detailed service information contained within the 2007 Induction Programme. As a quick and easy reference guide we propose to produce a 'Top Tips' Booklet which will cover, for example, the following topics:-
  - Member Officer Relationships
  - Member Support
  - Managing Casework
  - Time Management
  - Dealing with the Media
  - E-Mail
  - Members Personal Safety

9. This revised Strategy forms the cornerstone for the Authorities application for Charter Plus Status which we aim to achieve by October 2011.
10. Following the Local Government Elections in May 2011, there will be a number of new Councillors. It is therefore important that a robust and appropriate Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members is established which details the Councils commitment to providing appropriate learning and development opportunities for all Councillors and sets out the Councils approach to this. This Strategy and its commitment to Elected Member Learning and Development will be evaluated during the inspection process for Charter Plus.
11. The Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members will provide members with the opportunity to gain a firmer understanding of both their roles and the functions of the Council and the opportunity to engage in their on-going personal development.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. The refresh of the Members Learning and Development Strategy and delivery of the Induction Programme will be met from within existing budgets. It is anticipated that the provision of equipment for newly elected members will be dependant on the number of new members.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no Legal Implications contained in this report.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

14. This Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.”

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

15. Assessment and delivery of the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members contributes towards the Stronger Communities element of the Community Strategy.

### **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

16. In view of the nature of the proposals an assessment is not considered to be necessary.

### **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

17. Members of the Members Advisory Panel and other members were involved in the Assessment process as part of the Council's Charter Status application which was used as feedback for the purpose of the refresh of the Strategy. This report has been presented to the Members Advisory Panel for comment.

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Education related? No

Background Papers: **Report to Members Advisory Panel 31 January 2011**

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: **Not Ward Specific**

Property None