

AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO COUNCIL
4 MARCH 2015

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015 – 19 AND INDUCTION PROGRAMME
FOLLOWING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 7TH MAY 2015**

SUMMARY

To present Cabinet with the proposed changes to the Member Learning & Development Strategy and consider Induction arrangements in readiness for the next Council elections in 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:-

1. endorse the updated Member Learning & Development Strategy for 2015 - 2019
2. endorse the 2015 Induction arrangements, and in particular the proposal that the annual Adults and Children Safeguarding training and the resources development session regarding local government finance are made mandatory for all Members.

DETAIL

1. In 2011 the Council agreed the Member Learning & Development Strategy 2011 – 15, along with the 2011 Induction Programme, to ensure that effective support and development was in place for Elected Members, benefitting councillors individually and also ensuring that they were better placed to serve their local communities. The Authority received accreditation for North East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development in 2012, having earlier met Charter Status standards in 2007. In doing so, the Council was able to demonstrate that it had built elected member capacity in line with what was recognised as good practice.
2. The Authority will next be assessed for Charter Plus reaccreditation in Autumn/Winter 2015. Assessment will be measured against a revised, streamlined, set of performance standards which have been introduced by NEREO, and now include a focus on community leadership. This had been anticipated and we had already started to incorporate a community leadership focus into the development programme.
3. The Learning & Development Strategy has been refreshed for 2015 – 2019 to incorporate the revised performance standards, ensuring that the Authority will be best placed to meet the requirements when assessed. The proposed Programme incorporates best practice from local authorities, regionally and nationally, builds upon the positive feedback received from elected members following the last Induction held in 2011, and reflects areas for development recommended by

LGA/NEREO as part of Charter Plus accreditation for the Authority's approach to Member Development in August 2012. In addition, and to complement the Strategy, the Induction Programme has also been refreshed, and will commence following the Local Elections on 7th May 2015.

Learning & Development Strategy 2015 - 2019

4. The proposed Learning & Development Strategy 2015 – 2019, which outlines the Councils support and development priorities for Elected Members, is attached at **Appendix 1**.
5. As noted in the Strategy, Member Development needs will be identified and delivered within the main themes of:

i) Regulatory Committees

Annual mandatory training will be provided for each of the quasi-judicial decision making bodies as stated in the Constitution. Mandatory training will be offered to all Members, thereby increasing the number of Members eligible to sit as a substitute. Providing this training achieves several of the Charter Plus performance standards, including essential Committee Learning and Development.

The annual mandatory Licensing training will build on the 2014 session, which incorporated the public health element, along with providing the overview of what the Council licensed, why it did so, and how. In addition there will be the opportunity for Chair and Vice Chair of Licensing to attend the Institute of Licensing's Annual Conference / Training Event. To complement the mandatory training, an introduction to Environmental Health will be presented during the Induction Programme (detailed below).

In addition to the annual training, **Mandatory Planning training** will be enhanced from 2015 onwards to include a specific Planning Session around the Local Plan, with ongoing development sessions throughout the year to ensure focus and clarity of decision making around our Local development plans.

Mandatory Employee Appeal training has also been incorporated into the induction programme (see below), and will be held on an annual basis.

ii) Corporate Training Needs

The Council will identify Learning and Development events arising from Government requirements and Local Policies, e.g. changes in corporate priorities, new legal requirements, developments in local government services, changes in local government structures or funding, identified areas of service performance requiring scrutiny or challenge etc. These events will be tailored to the subject matter and may include Policy Briefings and Overview Reports presented to Select Committees.

Prior to the May 2015 elections all candidates will receive information about the principles of conduct in public life and the standards of conduct expected of Members and Co-optees arising from the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. At the Count, elected Members will receive a pack of information that will include a copy of the Principles of Conduct and the Code of Conduct

for Members. The Induction Programme post elections will include training and development in relation to the principles and standards of conduct, and the importance of maintaining high standards of conduct at all times.

In light of the recent national safeguarding issues and corporate priorities it is proposed that the annual, comprehensive, **Adults and Children Safeguarding** training is made mandatory for all Members. The sessions will provide in-depth understanding of Safeguarding, developing skills and knowledge in relation to recognising the abuse of vulnerable people.

iii) Role of Members / Identifying Personal Support Needs

The Role Descriptions for all Elected Members will be refreshed to reflect the changing roles since the 2011 Local elections. To ensure that Members are fully equipped to carry out their roles, the following training and development will be offered:

Scrutiny - Following the initial introduction, questioning and challenge skills training, and chairing skills training as part of the induction programme, Scrutiny Members will receive annual overview reports highlighting current issues as part of their ongoing development. The opportunity for Members to attend meetings of the North East Joint Scrutiny Network to discuss national and regional developments and share best practice will continue, as well as ad hoc training sessions on specific areas relating to scrutiny as required e.g. Health Scrutiny Members received Human Rights and Home Care Training in September 2014.

In addition, the Scrutiny Team have been working with officers across the region to develop a package of Member training on questioning and challenge skills utilising regional health development funding from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Whilst elements of the training will focus on issues raised by the Francis Inquiry report in relation to the quality and safety of the health services and the more recent Jay report in relation to safeguarding, the training is also being designed so that elements of it could be applied to other scrutiny work to enhance questioning and challenge skills in other Scrutiny Committees. The training will be delivered to individual Select Committees following the 2015 elections.

Chairing Challenging Meetings and Operating in a Filmed Environment – Sessions have been held in December 2014/January 2015 to refresh Members chairing and media awareness skills in response to the new legislation, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, which permit filming, recording and webcasting of public local authority meetings. The feedback from these sessions was extremely positive, and the sessions will be repeated as part of the 2015 Induction, before Annual Council on 3 June.

Police and Crime Panel - As part of the development programme all members of the Panel will receive an induction, which will include details on the budget process, the role of the Panel, dealing with complaints, statutory information, a guide to the police as an organisation, and the Commissioners role. In addition the Panel will also have the opportunity to attend development events with Police and Community safety colleagues that will be arranged as required.

Health and Wellbeing Board - As part of the development programme all members of the Panel will receive an induction, which will include NHS Commissioning, North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust, and the role of the third sector. In addition, continuous monthly development sessions will be held to provide the Board with details relating to particular priorities and services provided in the borough.

Members will be assisted in pursuing any further learning and development arising from their **Personal Support Plans**, which could include, for example, signposting and advice to available resources and attendance at appropriate regional and national development events.

iv) **Community Leadership**

This year's delivery programme has begun to recognise the changing landscape within local government and how this impacts on the role ward councillors should play in relation to community leadership, in terms of community engagement, community advocacy and community development.

In February – April 2014 16 Members took part in a **Health & Wellbeing Pilot Programme for Frontline Councillors**. The programme aimed to support members in their community leadership/development role by enhancing understanding of health improvement and community wellbeing, enhancing their community advocacy role, and informing how constituents / communities can benefit. The feedback received showed that the pilot is an effective way to develop Members knowledge and skills so that they are fully equipped to fulfil their role as a community leader, as well as support the Council to carry out its objectives in the Council Plan at ward level, by making informed choices on the frontline to promote and improve health and wellbeing. It is therefore proposed to run the programme again in Autumn 2015, and to also examine how the principles of the initial pilot can be replicated in other service areas.

A key issue that was raised by the Health & Wellbeing Pilot was a need for training in Mental Health. It is therefore proposed that two **Mental Health First Aid** courses will be offered to Members, in September 2015 and February 2016. The course teaches people to recognize the crucial warning signs that indicate an individual is developing a mental health problem.

In addition the **Social Media for Elected Members** development session was successfully ran by Excela Interim Management & Consultancy in 2013. The course examined the use of social media as a means of engaging with residents, particularly those who do not engage through more traditional routes, so that they can be informed of what is happening in their locality. Support was subsequently offered to Members in setting up social media accounts. This course will be offered again to Members in summer 2015 as part of the induction programme, along with appropriate support as needed.

Leadership Training - 11 of the current elected Members have completed the LGA's Leadership Academy Programme, and a further eight members have also undertaken focussed programmes within the Leadership Programme. The attendance at these programmes has helped to equip the members involved in taking on new roles, and assisting others in their various

leadership roles. It is intended that the Council will continue to support Members attendance at the Leadership Programme.

6. A formalised **Member Mentoring/Buddying Scheme** will be available to all Members. The programme has been developed, following approval by Members Advisory Panel, with support from an experienced peer(s) at the LGA. The first phase included an introductory session provided by the LGA held in March 2014 and repeated in June 2014, which explored the required skills for being a mentor, looked at what the mentoring relationship should involve, and how the typical mentoring process between elected members can work. Ongoing support will be provided for the mentors at intervals over a 12 month period, and the success of the programme will be evaluated by March 2016. The proposed Mentoring scheme seeks to facilitate new ways of working, sharing of good practice, enable self-improvement, and encourage peer to peer learning, all of which were highlighted during Charter Plus assessment and remain a performance standard.
7. The election of a **Youth Member of Parliament (MYP)** will take place in February 2015, and following this nomination **Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA)** will be appointed. The MYP and SYA members will be given the opportunity to complete the British Youth Council (BYC) accredited Youth Voice Award, as well as attend BYC regional meetings and Leadership Development Programme, supported by Youth Direction.
8. **Admission Appeals Panel** – Mandatory in house training will be delivered to all panel members on a regular basis to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of the statutory guidance and developments in case law to carry out their role. This meets the requirements of the School Admission Appeals Code February 2012.
9. Following annual council on 3rd June, an initial programme of development will be available for cabinet members to assist them with their development. **Cabinet Role Guides** are being updated in line with the agreed changes to Cabinet posts, and will include details of the support being offered which includes a meeting between CMT and Cabinet. Collectively, Cabinet will also be assisted in their group development through regular portfolio briefing at pre-Cabinet meetings.

2015 Induction Programme

10. The 2015 Induction Programme will be advertised and included in Candidates and Agents packs prior to the May elections.
11. Elected Members will receive a 'Getting You Started' pack on the day of the Count, which will include key information regarding car parking, Map/Addresses for Council Officers, door codes etc. Full demographic Ward profiles will also be given to all members and all Members will be offered an opportunity to conduct Ward Walks in the company of relevant officers from each Service Area.
12. The induction will commence on the first Monday following the elections (11th May 2015) and the Induction Programme is attached at **Appendix 2** for Cabinet's consideration.
13. A Democratic Services Drop In session is scheduled for the first day of the programme, 11th May. The purpose of the event will be to meet the Team, complete Register of Members Interest forms, be issued with ID badges and car passes, and

be given general housekeeping duties. Members will be able to discuss their requirements for mentor support from an experienced peer member within their own group. There will be the opportunity to discuss initial ICT set up and make arrangements to receive one-to-one E-genda training. This will also include a tour of the Customer Contact Centre at 10.00am and 2.30pm.

14. It will also be during the Drop In event that Democratic Services will book meetings with individual Members to discuss their Personal Support Plans (PSP). The purpose of the PSP is to identify Members training and development needs by undertaking a self-analysis of their skills against the Member Development/Role/Skills using a RAG rating system. It is proposed to run PSPs over the first six months of office allowing Members to judge when the time is right for them to consider their support/development needs. Once the PSP has been completed the Team will seek suitable development/training resources for skills highlighted as a development. Members Roles are in the process of being updated, and work is ongoing to ensure that the Member development system is fit for purpose i.e. to include the required refreshed roles guides and continuing to offer remote online assessment.
15. Day two of the programme will consist of an introduction to the Council by the Chief Executive, supported by CMT. This session has been booked 10.00am – 12.30pm, in the Jim Cooke Suite, with lunch afterwards.
16. As noted in paragraph nine, following annual council on 3rd June, an initial programme of development will be available for Cabinet Members to assist them with their development. Cabinet Role Guides are being updated in line with the agreed changes to Cabinet posts, and will include details of the support being offered which will include a meeting with CMT.

Mandatory Training

17. As noted above it is suggested that the annual safeguarding training becomes mandatory for all Members. These sessions will be held on the below dates:
 - 19th May, 3.00pm – 5.00pm – Corporate Parenting and Children Safeguarding
 - 21st May, 2.00pm – 4.00pm – Adult Safeguarding
18. Planning, Licensing and Employee Appeals Panel training has been scheduled to take place within a week of Membership for these Committees/Panel being agreed at Annual Council on 3rd June, to ensure that they are fully equipped to make decisions before the first meetings. Details are as follows:
 - 4th June – Licensing Training
 - 9th June – Planning Training
 - 11th June – Employee Appeals Panel
19. This meets the requirement of the Council's Constitution 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.
20. In addition, it is proposed that the Resources development session regarding Local Government Finance and Demographic Information is also mandatory, to ensure that

Members are fully briefed on the situation within their wards and the borough as a whole. This session will take place on 22nd May, 10.00am – 12.30pm.

Tour of the Borough

21. Dates have been identified for a tour of the borough as follows

- Wed 13th May 2015 1.00-4.00pm;
- Wed 20th May 2015 9.30am-12.30pm

22. An itinerary for the tour has been identified to include major regeneration schemes, and will include a half hour break:

- Depart Municipal Buildings
- Northshore –Boulevard Road
- Portrack
- A19 – Wynyard Business Park
- Wynyard Park Plus Housing
- A689 to Billingham Town Centre inc. 'Extra Care' – round the centre
- Bede College, Marsh House Lane & Billingham Campus
- Belasis – SNF, Fujifilm, Billingham House Site
- A19 – A174 Thornaby junction
- Ingleby Barwick – New builds
- Yarm – Kirklevington end
- Yarm High Street
- Durham Lane (Nifco)
- Preston ParkA66 – Yarm Road – turn left - Yarm Lane – Parkfield – West End Gardens
- Town Centre – High Street – Church Road
- Return to Municipal Buildings

Additional Member Support

23. Dates have been identified for the following additional support sessions as part of the Induction Programme:

- 15th May, 10.00am – 11.00am – Health and Safety Training
- 18th May, 10.00am – 12.00noon – Development & Neighbourhood Services presentation regarding Specific Priorities, Community and Planning Issues
- 18th May 2.00pm – 4.00pm – Introduction to Environmental Health Services
- 22nd September/20th October/24th November, 10.00am – 1.00pm – Community Leadership Health & Wellbeing Programme

24. A programme of ICT training dates is to be delivered in partnership with Tees Achieve and relevant officers regarding use of email and Microsoft application as well as SBC internal IT systems. Tees Achieve will be attending the Democratic Services Drop In event to assess the requirements of Members. Training in the effective use of social media, including the Councils protocols on social media, will also take place and it is proposed to hold this on 27th July 2015, as outlined in paragraph 5.iv.

25. In addition the following training is also being scheduled to ensure that Members are fully equipped to carry out their roles effectively at the various meetings they will be required to attend:

- Introduction to the role of scrutiny, overview of the Councils scrutiny arrangements, and ingredients of an effective Scrutiny Review, to take place at the first meeting of each Committee
- In-depth questioning and challenge skills
- Chairing Skills
- Protocols and etiquette to be aware of, as well as chairing of 'difficult' meetings, when meeting are being recorded/broadcast (see paragraph 5.iii).

Market Place Events

26. Due to the success of the Market Place Events in 2011, showcasing the many different services provided by the Council, the event will be repeated for the 2015 programme.

Conclusion

27. Following the Local Government Elections in May 2015, it is expected that there will be a number of new Councillors. It is therefore important that a robust and appropriate member Induction Programme is put in place to ensure that both new and existing Councillors are able to understand the structure of the Authority and obtain the support needed to enable them to fulfil their roles. All prospective candidates for both Borough ward and parish/town Council elections will be given details of the Induction Programme with their nomination packs and invited to attend relevant sessions. In addition a Mentoring Programme across all groups as appropriate and necessary will be encouraged and supported to ensure all Members are able to access the full range of support available to them.
28. The induction programme outlined should offer new Members, within the first few weeks of their election, 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.
29. Cabinet considered the item on 12th February 2015 and a copy of the relevant minute extract is attached to the report.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

30. The cost of providing training for Elected Members will be met from existing budgets.

Legal

31. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

32. The risks arising from what is proposed can be categorised as low to medium. The risk of not developing and supporting members may result in members not being equipped to fulfil their roles effectively. Managed within daily operational procedures.

COUNCIL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

33. Effective local democracy – manage and deliver the Member Learning and development programme
34. Dynamic and effective leadership – provide an effective Community Leadership Role

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

35. This report is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as it does not involve a new policy, strategy or change in delivery of a service.

CONSULTATION

36. Consultation has taken place with CMT, Heads of Service, and Group Leaders, before being shared with all Members for comments. Following consideration at Cabinet, the Learning & Development Strategy and Induction Programme will be presented to Council for approval.
37. In order not to lose altogether some of the knowledge and expertise built up by elected members not standing in the next local elections, or those who are subsequently not re-elected, it is proposed that they are contacted post May 2015 to ascertain their views on the quality of previous training provided, development and support received. The results will be evaluated and any proposals incorporated into future learning and development activities.

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<u>Background Papers:</u>	None
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	Not applicable