

REPORT FOR: Member Development Panel

Date of Meeting: 3 April 2014

Subject: Member Development Programme

Responsible Officer: Jon Turner, Divisional Director Human Resources Development & Shared Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix A – London Member Development Charter & Charter Plus Accreditation Guidelines
Appendix B – Political Skills Framework

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report considers the approach to the design of the member development programme 2014-15, its alignment to the Political Skills Framework.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Panel comment on the approach;

Reason (for recommendation): To keep Members informed of the approach to the design of the member development programme 2014-15.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

It is clear that the next generation of local government will be leading through unprecedented times. The role of councillors will be central in:

- Building civil society
- Making tough decisions
- Devolving power to local people
- Promoting fairness
- Tackling inequality

We therefore need to ensure that our members are equipped to tackle these challenges.

The Member Development Programme for 2014 is key to achieving the Council's vision and corporate priorities, and is being finalised for implementation following the elections in 2014.

In preparation of the design of the programme and at the request of the Member Development Panel, we have considered aligning the programme to:

1. Charter for Member Development developed by Local Government Improvement and Development and London Councils. see appendix I, or
2. The Political Skills Framework(PSF) see appendix II

Background

The Charter for Member Development

The Charter is a joint accreditation with Local Government Improvement and Development and London Councils.

Harrow Council signed up to the Charter when it was first launched and was awarded Charter status in October 2009. In 2012, we were reassessed in order to maintain the Charter but were unsuccessful.

The Charter supports councils' to adopt a structured approach and provides a robust, structured approach for councils to councillor development and support, and to building elected elected member capacity.

In summary, there are four elements to the Charter for which evidence needs to be provided. It is **NOT** based on the competencies required by councillors:

- Commitment to councillor development
- Strategic approach to councillor development
- Learning and development and its effectiveness in building capacity
- Supporting Councillors

The Political Skills Framework (PSF)

The PSF was first created in 2004, but was revised in 2013, to take account of the changing and enhanced role of councillors since 2004. It covers the following six core skills for councillors;

- Local leadership
- Partnership working
- Communication skills
- Political understanding
- Scrutiny and challenge
- Regulating and monitoring

The PSF is underpinned by a toolkit which provides a means for councillors of identifying and highlighting the skills needed for the role. It provides a self-assessment learning tool to inform a personal development plan.

Findings

The PSF has more breadth and depth and is focused on developing member competence, skill, knowledge and experience. And has a set of positive and negative indicators/behaviours that can be used to identify strengths and areas for development.

The PSF is a flexible tool it can be easily used for new members or a base for member reviews and organisation needs analysis; it can be accessed on a 24 hour basis via our e-learning portal and provides us with the additional option to create Career Pathways.

The formation of Career Pathways means we can develop the programme in a way that clearly demonstrates what courses, skills and credentials members need to prepare for their next political role.

In contrast, the Charter is focused on evidencing the council's approach to member development, it does not suggest the areas/content to be covered in their development; neither does it suggest how their competence can be measured.

Assessment against the Charter will require a level of resources to be available to prepare a written submission. Costs cannot be quantified at this point as we would need to undertake an assessment of our current position in order to identify and plan an approach to bridge any gaps. Assessment against the Charter would be better placed once the new member development programme 2014/15 is implemented fully, as this could provide sufficient evidence.

Officers therefore propose to postpone consideration of assessment against the Charter until 2015/16.

Section 3 – Financial Implications

Funding for the Member development programme and activities in this report will be contained within existing budget provision.

Section 4 - Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

If no, state why an EqIA was not carried out below:

The panel is invited to comment on how to ensure that the Member Development programme is inclusive for all new and existing members. These comments will be used to ensure that the process addresses any equality implications.

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

To help deliver a cleaner, safer and fairer Harrow, by ensuring ongoing training and development of Councillors.

Section 6 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 24.3.14		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 24.3.14		

Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Samantha Whittick, Workforce Development and Engagement Manager,
0208-424-1949

Background Papers: None