

## **ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

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### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To invite Members to consider the issue of establishing a structured and resourced approach to the training and development of Elected Members, in the context of new political management structures.

### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 There is no established training and development programme available to Elected Members. Their needs are currently met on an ad hoc basis, through a limited amount of in-house provision and attendance at external seminars and conferences. Financial resources are limited and do not extend to supporting a comprehensive programme of training and development.

- 2.2 This report invites the Sub-Committee to consider two points of principle:

- (a) whether or not it wishes to instruct officers to develop detailed proposals for a formal training and development programme, open to all Members; and if so
- (b) whether or not adequate financial and staffing resources should be allocated to support such a programme.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the requirement for training and development of Members in the context of new political structures, new ways of working, and the importance of the role of Members in developing the organisation and the area of Milton Keynes, be acknowledged.
- 3.2 That officers develop detailed proposals for a formal training and development programme, open to all Members.

3.3 That, once the Sub-Committee has received and approved the detailed proposals, it will consider a recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee to make adequate financial and staffing resources to support such a programme.

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 The Council currently only provides Members with very limited training, consisting mainly of induction training for new Members and on occasions one or two specialist courses such as Chaining Skills, Appraisal Training, and planned for later in this Council year, IT training for Members.

4.2 This limited provision is supplemented by Members' attendance at external conferences and courses, but there is no planned provision which forms part of an overall training programme available to Members.

#### 5. **Issues and Choices**

5.1 In broad terms, it may be possible to address the needs of Elected Members according to models already developed by other organisations such as the South East Employers Organisation (SEE) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU). In both these organisations the development of Elected Members starts with a formal induction process and moves on into core skills or modules.

5.2 Officers involved in arranging in-house training and development activities for Elected Members within this Council and the former Borough Council have given some thought to a way ahead for the Council based on training provision across three main areas:

(a) Information and explanation (a phased Induction Process);

(b) Skills Development (via Core Modules); and

(c) Policy Issues and Organisational Development (specific briefings and seminars).

5.3 Further detail of subjects which could be addressed within each of the three areas is given in the **Annex** to this report. Some of the elements could be delivered by Council officers, others would need to be commissioned from appropriate training providers.

5.4 Consideration of the how to identify and meet the needs of Members should include reference to the work being developed by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). A Section of the IDeA will be providing development, resource materials and support for Members, undertaking work on ethics, probity and changes in political management and conducting a councillors' exit survey. They will also undertake work on the development of a strategy for Member development. The strategy will incorporate current initiatives and assess future skills needs and development for all Members. Their work will influence product development to assist Councillors in areas such as their new scrutiny and executive roles.

5.5 The IDeA will be working with the Council's Members for the first time on 14 January 2000 when it will be running a simulation exercise on new democratic structures. It is anticipated that a number of training and development issues and needs will be identified as part of this process.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

None.

### 6.2 Equalities

The introduction of a structured training and development programme for Elected Members would help to ensure that all new Members have equal access to information and support, and that their individual needs can be identified and addressed appropriately.

### 6.3 Financial

Whilst some of the training and development activities already in place for employees could be appropriately opened up to Elected Members too, this would not be sufficient to meet the unique needs of Members. The budget in 1999/2000 is £2,120. It is anticipated that the introduction of a structured approach to Member development would require an annual budget of £30,000 in 2000/01 and thereafter.

### 6.4 Legal

While the Council has no legal requirement to provide training, appropriate training will help to ensure that all Members are aware of their legal responsibilities.

### 6.5 Staff and Accommodation

An enhanced training programme will inevitably have implications for staff, both in the administration and provision of training. Appropriate accommodation for some events will also be necessary.

Background Papers: Making a Difference - IDeA publication