

COMMITTEE REPORT

CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2016

MIDDLESBROUGH MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2016/2017

HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To consider supporting a revised Member Development Policy for 2016/2017.

BACKGROUND

2. Given that the existing Member Development policy has not been reviewed for some time and in the light of the outcomes of the Corporate Peer Review, it was considered appropriate and timely to undertake a comprehensive review of the Policy.
3. The attached Programme, which is considered to be more ambitious in nature, is structured around the following elements:
 - aims and objective of the Programme;
 - training available to all Members and Senior Members;
 - expectations and responsibilities of Members;
 - attendance at external events;
 - annual report; and
 - budget.
4. A key new element to the proposed new approach is the introduction a competency skills framework (based on the Local Government Association's 'Political Skills Framework') which would help identify individual development needs around the following competencies:
 - local leadership;
 - partnership working;
 - communication skills ;
 - political understanding
 - scrutiny challenge; and
 - regulating and monitoring.
5. Whilst Members will in part be supported by officers within Democratic Services, the key element in delivering the framework will be through self-reflective learning undertaken by the Councillors themselves.

6. Whilst the Policy also sets out plans for a range of other development opportunities for all Members, it also recognises that Senior Members (such as Chairs and Executive Members), will need some bespoke training.
7. A key element to the Programme's success will be the level to which Members engage and to that end the Policy outlines the expectations and responsibilities that will be placed on Councillors. As part of this approach, once the Policy has been formally approved, there will be Member briefings to highlight amongst other things the benefits and opportunities that this new approach will bring.
8. The Policy also takes account of those recommendations arising out of the Corporate Peer Review relevant to Member training. Modules have therefore been included in this year's Programme (see paragraph 9 below).
9. For information purposes, attached as an appendix to the Policy, is a schedule detailing training/development events that have either been delivered so far or are to be delivered later in 2016/17.

Timescale for Introduction

10. If approved, Member briefings will then be held and whilst most of the Programme will then be delivered on an ongoing basis, it is considered that the Competency Framework, in recognition of the necessary preparatory work that must be undertaken, be introduced with effect from 2017/2018.
11. For information purposes, the following figures have been obtained from some neighbouring councils in respect of budgets set aside for member training and development:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Redcar and Cleveland | None – in house provision |
| Stockton on Tees | £10,000 |

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

12. The current allocation within the Members' budget for training and development is £,6,000 However in recognition of the more ambitious Programme, it is proposed that this be increased in 2017/18 to £20,000 to cover the costs of additional training that will need to be provided through the proposed Members' Competency Skills Framework. Further costs are also likely to arise from the introduction of the Senior Members' delivery framework. Such an increase can be funded through an under-spend in the Members' budget.

RECOMMENDATION

13. That Members:
 - a) support the attached Member Development Policy for 2016/17; and
 - b) support the increase in the current allocation for Member training and development from £6,000 to £20,000, to be funded through an underspend in the Members' budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

14. There are no background papers that were used in compiling the report.

AUTHOR

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