

DECISION-MAKER:	GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE		
SUBJECT:	MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
DATE OF DECISION:	23 SEPTEMBER 2013		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF LEGAL, HR AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report gives an overview of Member learning and development and provides information on the provision and support for Members. It follows recent discussion by Group Leaders. Members are invited to comment on any aspect of Member learning and development in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To consider and endorse the Member Development Strategy

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing and managing programmes of guidance, advice and training on ethics, standards and probity for Councillors and employees and on the local Code of Conduct for Councillors.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. None. Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing Member Learning and Development although Members have the option of approving or rejecting the proposals within the report.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

Member Learning and Development

3. Previously, the priorities set for Member Development as part of the 2010-2013 strategy were:-
 - To ensure that Members have a significant role in leading, developing and evaluating Member Development plans and programmes.
 - To ensure that Member learning and development meets national standards for elected Member Development, including the South East Charter for Member Development..
 - Linking Member Development to the Council's strategic priorities for

employee learning.

- Working with other services and in partnership with other local authorities to enhance the learning and development opportunities for Members and improve cost effectiveness.

4. In reviewing the priorities as a result of a very limited budget, it was considered that the issue of members' attendance at conferences and the budgets and the management of this process required reconsideration and review to ensure that there was an adequate budget to train and develop members.
5. In addition, the Governance Committee has considered that Member Learning and Development is a matter that requires greater prominence and take up by members. It can only ever be voluntary, but just as officers require training, it is suggested that members equally need to do so to fully discharge their roles in the most appropriate manner. Similarly, as a result of the recent Monitoring Officer's report into the resignation of Councillor Morrell as a Cabinet Member, the Council recommended that the Governance Committee should consider whether the current training and development arrangements for officers and members should be revised.
6. Group Leaders have recently discussed the overall issue and are of the view that they wish to lead on member development and budget spend. As a result the options below appear to officers to provide the best way forward in achieving as comprehensive a member development programme as can be reasonably achieved. In addition the recent LGA Peer Review made specific recommendations in the Action Plan regarding member development. The proposals in this report complement that Plan.

Meeting National Standards for Member Development

7. The LGA in conjunction with South East Employers has a national Charter for Councillor Development which is regionally based and Member Development planning is aimed at achieving the standards for accreditation for the South East Charter. The cost of the national Charter for Councillor Development is a one off payment of £3,000 for a duration of three years and once obtained, the award is held for a further three years.

Linking Member Development to the Council's strategic priorities

8. The Council has five strategic priorities for employee learning, and whilst there are distinct differences between Member and employee learning needs, having a framework for Member Development based on the corporate strategic priorities for learning would enable comparison and improve effectiveness in prioritising and evaluating Member learning and development. The five strategic priorities for employee development are:-
 - Meeting the compulsory demands placed on the Council.
 - Developing and maintaining Corporate Standards.
 - Supporting the Change Agenda and Customer Care
 - Developing Current and Future Managers (Leaders)
 - Improving the level of essential skills in the workforce
9. All learning programmes, courses and seminars will remain linked to one of

the above corporate strategic priorities and reported on accordingly. This will also underpin the compulsory package of training for Members which the Independent Remuneration Panel originally recommended (but which cannot be unilaterally imposed of course).

Member Development Strategy

10. To support Members in their role it is suggested that a clear, flexible strategy be adopted. This would set out the criteria by which Learning and Development is being delivered, would provide an audit for monitoring and review and also would clearly set out what members would be entitled to. It is therefore proposed that the strategy should be based on a number of linked elements which would identify and develop member learning and development needs.
- Induction programme
 - Meeting member development needs as identified through Personal Development Planning
 - Corporate objectives and initiatives
 - External Development activities such as, conferences or legislative changes

Identifying Member Development Needs

11. **(a) Induction Programme –**
to ensure that we provide Members with a minimum induction programme and some minimum training in order to undertake their duties, the induction programme should consist of the core skills in respect of topics such as finance, IT, key corporate themes, initiatives and directorate overviews. Members would be expected to undertake code of conduct training, equalities and diversity awareness training, committee relevant training, i.e. planning and licensing, role specific training i.e. chairing skills, scrutiny and corporate parenting training
12. **(b) Personal Development Planning –**
Whilst the responsibility for identifying learning and development needs rests with individual members, it is suggested that Members should be encouraged to undertake an analysis/personal development plan process. Personal development planning would supplement generic training and would satisfy individual needs and develop individual skills.
13. **c) Corporate objectives and Initiatives –**
Members of the Council carry out a wide range of roles and need to keep up to date with over-arching strategic challenges. It is therefore recommended that we have a Leadership budget – This would be a budget specifically for the Leader and Cabinet or a member carrying out a specific role such as the Chair of a Committee or a representational role such as opposition Group Leaders. This was a Peer Review report priority. It would therefore provide Leadership training for a new Leader or Cabinet members and provide any focused training for political leadership – i.e. Children’s Services, or the newly created Health and well-Being Board. Without such a budget, training for matters such as the Health and Well-being Board would take up a large amount of the current learning and development budget. In addition, it would

provide role specific training for Chairs of Committees on new legislation and initiatives.

14. **(d) External Development activities-**

There is currently an approved conference list. Consideration should be given to reviewing the approved list and associated attendance. There are no separate conference budgets so costs are met from the Learning and Development budget. The list contains 15 conferences, and if all were attended, would cost @ £18,000. However, in reality, only the LGA conference from the approved list is ordinarily attended although other conference attendance is currently provided for such as the Miami Cruise Conference.

Criteria for attendance

15. In order to ensure value for money and provide an audit trail for effective monitoring, it is recommended that the present criteria for attendance on training/conferences should be retained as follows:

The event must relate to the official business of the Council and the purpose should contribute to the priorities and values of the Council. It must also meet at least one of the following criteria:-

- a) Provides an opportunity to positively promote the city of Southampton on a national and international stage.
- b) Gives an opportunity for the Council's views to be fully represented at important national and international conferences and events:
- c) Gives an opportunity to meet with key individuals and organisations to promote support for key initiatives and developments in the city of Southampton, attract investment and share experience/expertise.
- d) Provides the opportunity to meet with key individuals from local and national government.
- e) Provides the opportunity to attract inward investment into the city of Southampton and to strengthen and develop links with twin and partner cities.
- f) Provides the opportunity for the Council to participate in trade missions and delegations to promote local and regional economic development.
- g) Gives an opportunity to gather and exchange information on new projects and policy areas.
- h) Gives an opportunity to promote areas of expertise and give guidance to other local authorities within the UK and abroad.
- i) Gives the opportunity for Members to develop experience and expertise in areas that meet the Council's priorities or for which Members have specific responsibility for policy development and implementation; and
- j) Give the opportunity for personal development that reflects the roles, responsibilities and personal development plans of the individual Member or Members.

Member expectations

16. Group Leaders have recommended having a small proportional budget for use at the discretion of Group Leaders. However, in order to ensure value for money and provide an audit trail for effective monitoring, the Group Leaders should consider the justification for Member attendance outside of any agreed attendance criteria.
17. It is suggested that a small allocation of £150 per member be included. Cabinet Members and Group Leaders would have their own budget so would not be included and this would therefore be for the remaining group members. The budget would then cover anything that didn't fit into the agreed criteria set out above. So at present this would mean that the Conservative Group would be allocated a budget of £2,250. The Labour Group would be allocated a budget of £3,000 and the 2 other Groups £150. Total = £5,550

Budget

18. Currently Legal, HR and Democratic Services has a very small budget of £4,400 pa to cover all member inductions, training, development, LGA Conference attendance, other seminar attendance etc. This is supplemented by other Directorates paying for ad hoc courses etc direct. The total budget or spend each year is therefore currently difficult to quantify. Other Unitary Councils have much larger budgets and for those operating a 4 year election cycle, budgets are often supplemented during the election year. Many therefore have a base budget ranging from £13,000-£21,000 for training each year but those Councils on four yearly election cycles will then increase this to @ £20,000-£30,000 for enhanced Leadership development or training for new Councillors following the elections
19. In order to deliver the reviewed learning and development strategy it is suggested that the following budget be considered:
 - (a) **Induction** – most of the training undertaken on the induction is provided by officers in house. The costs therefore would be for the Personal Development Planning (PDP) and any costs of external courses identified such as speed reading and for training provided externally such as Planning. The costs for PDPs are @ £100 per Member. If the budget allowed for all new Members to have PDPs that would cost £1,600. In addition, money would be needed to cover any external training needed. A budget of @ 6K should cover the costs for induction.
 - (b) **Corporate objectives and initiatives** – Leadership training can be expensive and if the Council had a completely new administration this could require training for the Leader and all Cabinet Members. Given that it is suggested that this part of the budget should also cover members carrying out a specific role such as the Chair of a Committee or a representational role such as opposition Group Leaders, the budget should reflect its importance. A budget of @ 10K should be included for this element.
 - (c) **External Development activities** – This year the cost of

attendance at the approved conferences has been @£3,600. It is suggested that this figure be rounded up to £4,000.

(d) **Group Leader Budget** - £5,550

The estimated cost of the budget would therefore be:

Induction - £6,000

Corporate objectives - £10,000

External activities - £4,000

Group Leader budget - £5,550

Total budget = £25,550 less the current Budget of £4,400 = @£21,150 increase. Rounded down to £21,000

Delivery

20. In order to provide effective training and to encourage attendance by members, it is suggested that a regular training day and time be set aside so that members always know when training will be provided. Thus, for example, at least one day a month should be specified as “Member Development Day” and these dates would be published in the calendar. Wherever possible, these dates would be used for training and development events and efforts would be made to avoid scheduling other member meetings at the same time.
21. Administrative support for member development would be provided by Democratic Services. Democratic Services would provide co-ordination of the strategy, promotion of the learning and development events, maintaining records and administration of the budget. Ad hoc training as at present is resource heavy, a more organised and regular programme will be easier to administer within existing resources.

Future Development of Member Learning and Development and the Role of Members in leading Member Development

22. It is suggested that any future Member Development Strategy needs to be aimed at providing a long-term view which remains flexible and reflects changing priorities and the needs of Members in order for them to fully engage and participate.
23. The training and development that can be provided is infinite in theory but we must, of course, be guided by what is both reasonable and appropriate. It is imperative that Members both own and drive the training agenda and are comfortable with what is being proposed. To that extent Group Leaders have agreed to take over the task of overseeing an annual costed programme under the auspices of an annual report to the Governance Committee.
24. The former terms of reference of the Member User Group included:-
 - To provide strategic leadership and direction for Member Development, including support services for Members and co-opted Members of the Council.
 - To lead, monitor and evaluate Member Development programmes and initiatives

Therefore, it is suggested that the Group Leaders now undertake this role and play a crucial role in ensuring that any strategy meets members’ needs

and that events are scheduled appropriately and effectively together with appropriate monitoring of the budget. The Group Leaders would therefore be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the strategy regularly together with approving the overall learning and development programme.

25. The Group Leaders would therefore have the responsibility to identify needs and appropriate training arising from for example, the introduction of new legislation and corporate governance issues. In addition, the Group Leaders would have responsibility for the monitoring of the suitability of the training provided and ensuring feedback from Members attending any external event to ensure that learning is shared within the Council.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

13. The proposals set out in the report will require an increase in the Members' Allowance Budget of £16,600.

Property/Other

- 14 N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

15. S101 Local Government Act 1972 and S1 Localism Act 2011

Other Legal Implications:

16. N/A

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

17. N/A

KEY DECISION?

No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None
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None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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