



REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT
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TO:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE:	26 APRIL 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO:	4	WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL
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SUBJECT:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	TO RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMEND THE FRAMEWORK FOR ADOPTION.
RECOMMENDATIONS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To note the results of the consultation on the on the proposed Member Development Framework; and To agree that the Member Development Framework be recommended to the Executive and Council for adoption. 	

Background

- The Standards Committee, on 2 February 2004, agreed the Member Development Framework for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive and Party Group Leaders. The decision made by the Committee at that time was:
 - the principles proposed for the Member Development Programme and framework be approved and they be used as the basis for consultation; and
 - the outcome of the consultation exercise be considered by the Committee in April 2004 with a view to the Member Development Framework being submitted to the Executive and the Council in May/June 2004 for adoption.
- A copy of the report to that meeting is attached at Annex 1 and sets out the details of the proposed framework.

Factors for Consideration

- This report sets out the results of that consultation and seeks the Committee's support for progressing the Framework to the next stages.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 31 March 2004 and set out below is the minute of that meeting:
 "The Committee had been consulted by the Standards Committee on the proposed Member Development Framework prepared following the Comprehensive

Performance Assessment process and the Peer Challenge that had identified this as an area for improvement. The Inspectors considered that whilst the Council had developed an effective induction process the current programme was too traditionally “knowledge based” and failed to address the wider skill/competency requirements to enable Members to understand and deal with their challenging roles within the new political structure and ethical framework.

During consideration of the report Members of the Committee made a number of comments on the value of the Member Development Framework and expressed doubt about the approach and its likely success. Examples cited by individual members were:

- the value of the Standards Committee being informed of Member attendance at training sessions;
- ensuring that Members’ constituents were satisfied with their performance;
- problems associated with the frequency of new Members joining the Council;
- the need to take account of the experience held by long standing Members and the value of this compared to training sessions; and
- the option of submitting individual Member plans direct to the Standards Committee rather than Personal Development Plans via the Group Leaders, which it was felt would not be supported by Members.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the comments of individual members on the proposed Member Development Framework be noted; and
- (ii) the Standards Committee be informed that the draft Member Development Framework was noted and that it should include Local Government Finance as a specific training area in the Programme.“

Executive

5. The Executive considered the report on 1 April 2004 and set out below is the minute of that meeting:

“The Executive considered a report which sought comments from the Executive on a proposed framework for a Member Development Programme. The report detailed the background, an outline framework to take forward Member Development, a proposed timetable, consultation undertaken, details in relation to Personal Development Plans, resource implications and associated conclusions.

Much discussion ensued on the report, and a number of views were expressed. The need for a training programme for Members was noted, and particular reference was made to induction and training for Members on issues such ethics and probity and Planning. The Executive were informed that a number of strong views had been expressed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, during their consideration of the report, the previous evening.

The Executive Member for Organisational Development suggested that joint training sessions could be undertaken where appropriate for Officers and Members as this

would assist cost-effectiveness.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee be informed of the endorsement by the Executive of the draft Member Development Framework, as set out in the circulated report.”

Party Group Leaders response

6. One response was received from the Group Leader of the Residents Associations on behalf of his Group which raised the following issues:
 - The proposed allocation of the budget and the reduced effectiveness if it was used for external courses for individuals as opposed to events for groups of Members;
 - The possibility of purchasing established training programme from a specialist company;
 - The need to move away from information giving to effective discussion/participation;
 - The split of the budget between Executive and non Executive Members;
 - The need to consider training requirements of community liaison activity.
7. The Group supported joint Member/Officer training where appropriate and the planning and skills matrix approach proposed.
8. Any further views from Group Leaders will be reported at the meeting.

Analysis of the consultation results

9. The Member Development Framework proposals by the Committee have received overall support with some reservations expressed by individual members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In relation to these points the Committee should note that:
 - It is important, particularly where Members are involved in regulatory functions (planning, licensing, employment), that they have received proper training. The Council has a liability for the conduct of Members and any risk associated needs to be reduced by ensuring Members have received training.
 - Training is intended to ensure Members have the appropriate knowledge and skills to undertake their responsibilities. Induction training is specifically built into the programme and much of the programme will be offered year on year in recognition of the frequency of new Members joining the Council.
 - The proposed Personal Development Plans are to assist with collating training requirements so that they can be prioritised for the benefit of all Members and the Council. The proposed mechanism will assist officers to understand individual needs/requests and to collate these to develop a programme.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

10. The Committee should also be aware that the results of the recent CPA inspection made the following comments on the support provided to Members:

“Councillors are well supported to improve their capacity. Training is available on a wide variety of topics and the council monitors effectiveness through feedback sheets and attendance records. Most councillors are equipped with laptop computers and have publicised personal email addresses. Support from officers is well regarded – especially the quality of reports. Training has not covered wider issues for councillors up until now. There is no training to help with engagement in the community and leadership. Although the general level of support assists the councillors to meet public expectations, there is room for improvement.”

11. The Framework that the Committee have suggested responds positively to these points and provides a positive structure for the Council to develop the skills, knowledge and attributes to assist Members in operating in the modern Council.

Next Stages

12. Subject to the Development Framework being adopted by the Council it will be expanded to build on the general approach included within the structure.
13. Subject to any further comments from the Committee the Framework would be considered by the Executive and Council on 17 June and 29 July for their adoption and subsequent introduction in 2004/05.
14. The Full proposed programme will be reported to the Committee at a later stage once it has been completed.

Resource Implications

15. The Council has approved a budget of £20,000 for Member Development which represents an increase of £13,000 to take account of the proposed new approach.

Conclusions

16. The responses received from the consultation have overall been positive and the Committee is requested to consider agreeing the Programme for the Executive and Council to adopt.

Background Papers: Agenda/Minutes: Standards Committee 2 February 2004;
Overview and Scrutiny Committee 31 March 2004 and
Executive 1 April 2004