

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER AND EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

31st May 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES SHARED SERVICE

**Report prepared by Tina Edwards, Learning & Development
Shared Service Manager**

1. Members Development Budget

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To review the programme for Member Development for 2012/13 based on the arrangements agreed last year by the Member & Employment & Development Panel, including additional new needs.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Human Resources

1.2.1 That the Group agrees the recommended programme and approach for Member Development for 2012/13.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 **Member Development Budget**

1.3.2 The Head of Human Resources Shared Service has delegated responsibility for decisions relating to all corporate training both Officer and Member.

1.3.3 Member Learning & Development activities are planned by the Learning & Development Shared Service Manager in consultation with Members and Key Officers. Due to the nature of the council and the way that the elections take place, many of the same learning activities, including conferences need to be provided each year.

1.3.4 This being said there are many more learning activities that are required in line with the needs identified by Members themselves, legislation, central government and those that arise from our commitment to partnership working and our desire to learn from each other and best practice.

The plan aims to address as many learning needs as possible, for example:

- Individual skills building, e.g. IT coaching, accelerated reading
- Legislative requirements, e.g. the impact of the new Localism Bill
- Role related, e.g. committee specific planning, licensing and internal audit
- Corporate requirements, e.g. understanding the priorities and how they can be delivered
- Networking & keeping up to date, e.g. conferences and the seminar series
- Knowledge & future focus, e.g. Leadership Academy and personal development planning

1.3.5 It is important that we ensure that an effective planning process is in place for all learning activities and that this planning process involves Members. With a continued commitment to provide value for money in all aspects of our work at the council it is imperative that careful thought is given to how the member budget is spent to ensure that maximum value from each activity is achieved.

The responsibility for ensuring value for money rests with all of us and it is vital that all learning is shared effectively with all members and disseminated widely.

1.3.6 Due to the impact of the Localism Bill and the continued importance of Community Leadership and Engagement, a member perspective on what support is required is vital to ensure that the changes becoming apparent are met as they emerge. A small member working group has been formed headed up by Cllr Hotson, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services to help in identifying the way forward.

1.3.7 Initially it is planned that a number of members will be interviewed to explore what Community Leadership and Engagement looks like and what learning needs there may be for members coming from the Localism Agenda. This will be followed by a member workshop to share the data and to gain the wider perspective.

1.3.8 In addition to the working group, a number of workshops have been carried out to keep members informed on the parts of the Localism Bill that have been agreed and how these areas affect member roles. Learning needs have also been identified at these workshops and will form part of the points for discussion at the interviews.

1.3.9 A survey was also carried out to help us understand how informed, engaged and effective current communication stands and the

outcomes of this survey will also form part of the discussion points for the interviews.

- 1.3.10 Due to the changing nature of member roles and the emerging needs that will continue to come out of the Localism Agenda, it is recommended that part of the budget remains 'unallocated' until the planned interviews and workshops have been held with members and also to accommodate any other needs that arise throughout the year.
- 1.3.11 It is recommended that the training needs as outlined on the attached plan at Appendix 1 is agreed, allowing the annual committee required training and conferences to take place.
- 1.3.12 It is further recommended that as additional needs are identified and funding is required, requests for funding are made using the application form within the Member Development Policy and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Learning & Development Shared Services Manager (see form at Appendix 2).
- 1.3.13 This report and the approach to Member Development is based on a number of assumptions, as follows:
 - 1.3.13.1 Member Development is driven by members for members;
 - 1.3.13.2 We will utilise partnership working as far as possible to arrange joint briefings/training for members so that networking and best practice opportunities are maximized;
 - 1.3.13.3 Any training that is attended by members from other council's; will be cross charged accordingly to the appropriate council;
 - 1.3.13.4 Any funds not utilised will be kept in the budget for any 'ad-hoc' and emerging training requirements;
 - 1.3.13.5 Members take responsibility for sharing and disseminating learning to fellow members and colleagues.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 Only booking activities and events on an 'ad hoc' first come first served basis.

This is not recommended as this will eliminate the possibility for taking a 'big picture' view. It is necessary to take a wider view in order that we can establish which conferences/learning activities will have the

biggest impact on either the effective performance of members in their role and/or the widest impact to all members.

This is especially important with the reduced and limited funds available. Careful thought and consideration about the activities that will have the most impact will deliver more value for money.

1.4.2 Plan the whole year ahead and the budget as we have for previous years. This is not recommended as the needs that will become apparent from the Localism Bill, changes to Standards and Scrutiny will not be provided for. Also it takes time for members and officers to understand and interpret current changes and this will lead to new learning needs as we progress throughout the year.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 Corporate and Customer excellence - Better service delivery to Members as there will be clarity around what is available for development. Questions around the budget and the forecasting process can be more readily answered.

1.5.2 Effective use of Officer and Member time as activities can be planned well in advance (as far as possible) and maximizing the budget that we have.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The council has made an ongoing commitment to provide members with the required tools and development to effectively equip them to perform in their roles. This part planned and part emergent approach gives reassurance that member learning needs are being identified and met. Thus resulting in better delivery of the services to constituents. Adapting to the changes faced by members and planning for some aspects of learning to be done in a more emergent way, means that we are limiting the risk of 'getting it wrong' by training on areas that are not yet fully clear.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

X
X

5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management

1.7.2 Financial impact on the Member’s Budget and the forecasting for following years, creating a more efficient use of resources.

1.7.3 There is an impact on Officers in that they are involved in planning and designing the sessions. As much of this is repeated annually, the time spent on this each year is reduced as the bulk of the work has been done and previous materials and experience can be utilised. Although this year time will need to managed very effectively in order to meet new needs that will arise rapidly and with shorter lead in times. Wherever possible resources will be shared with partners and sought from the National Agencies, who will provide guidance and training materials.

There are also advantages in utilizing the skills and experience of officers as it builds their own skills further and helps form strong and open relationships with members.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

1.8.2 Appendix 1 – Members Development Budget Plan 2012/13

1.8.3 Appendix 2- Request for funding for Training / Conferences

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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