

Governance Committee	
22 June 2020	Part I
Proposed Member Development Strategy	
Report by Chairman, Member Development Group	
Electoral Divisions: All	

Summary

This report presents the draft Member Development Strategy for consideration, following agreement by the Member Development Group (MDG) that the Council should undertake South East Employers' 'Charter for Elected Member Development', as supported by the Governance Committee at its meeting in September 2019.

To achieve Charter status, the County Council must have in place a clear councillor development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed evidencing that political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of members. The proposed Member Development Strategy brings together aspects of member development and provide a clear commitment to members to provide the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Recommendation

That the Member Development Strategy, as set out at Appendix A, be approved.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Member Development Group (MDG) is the custodian of all aspects of the member role and has responsibility for managing all aspects of the member development process. It is a sub-group of the Governance Committee.
- 1.2 This report presents the draft Member Development Strategy for consideration, following agreement by MDG that the Council should undertake South East Employers' 'Charter for Elected Member Development', as supported by the Governance Committee at its meeting in September 2019.

2. Member Development Strategy

- 2.1 Involvement in the Charter will provide a robust framework for continued professional member development. The benefits of Charter status are:
 - Stronger focus on learning and development and the member role.
 - A strategic and structured approach to member development.
 - Development has a clear, strong relevance to current challenges and opportunities and the achievement of strategic objectives.

- A robust analytical, evidence-based approach to members' needs.
 - Members are given the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead, serve and contribute more effectively.
 - The integration of new members into the Council is accelerated.
 - Succession planning, diversity and cultural behaviours are embedded.
 - Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.
- 2.2 To achieve Charter status, the County Council must have in place a clear member development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed, and it must show that political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of members. The proposed Member Development Strategy, as set out in Appendix A, brings together aspects of member development and provide a clear commitment to members to provide the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- 2.3 The Charter requires that the Member Development Strategy must evidence certain actions, which are that it:
- Is developed and monitored by a cross-party member development group (which for the Council is the MDG);
 - Identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with the Council's corporate, strategic objectives;
 - Includes an induction process and ensures that is evaluated after each election;
 - Has a structured process for assessing members' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives;
 - Provides equal access to learning and development for all members;
 - Provides a designated budget for member development;
 - Puts in place evaluation processes which look at the cost and benefits of member development; and
 - Puts in place a cross-party, member-led review process for the strategy.
- 2.4 In addition to the requirements of the Charter, the Strategy encompasses some of the wider provision for members, including:
- How the Council will support members to achieve a balance between their role and personal life, including provisions that help members to engage in development opportunities;
 - The provision of technology that supports members in their role; and
 - The ways in which the Council engages members opinions on learning and development matters.
- 2.5 MDG considered the draft Strategy at its meeting in February 2020 and recommendations from the group have been incorporated in the version which will is now presented to the Governance Committee.
- 2.6 MDG recommends that the Governance Committee considers and approves the Member Development Strategy.

Factors taken into account

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The whole membership has been consulted on a number of occasions about

various elements of member development which are now drawn together within this strategy. Following consultation with members, recommendations have been made and acted on, where practicable, and the resultant outcomes are incorporated into the strategy document.

- 3.2 The strategy has been written by MDG. As a member-led, cross-party group this allows representation on member learning and development matters from across the political spectrum.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council is currently in the process of developing a suite of member policies including caring and parental leave, absence, lone working, anti-harassment and social media. Some of these policies help to provide the basis of an environment which encourages and supports member development, but they do not, as stand-alone documents or as a suite of policies, provide for all aspects of member learning and development. These policies alone would not be sufficient to show the Council's commitment to and the process of member development within the authority.

5. Equality Duty

- 5.1 The strategy gives a commitment to provide fair opportunities for learning and development to all members.

6. Social Value

- 6.1 Well trained councillors are able to carry out their roles more effectively, thus supporting the Council to better achieve its aims and objectives and provide excellent services for local people.

7. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Human Rights Implications

- 8.1 Not applicable.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Member Development Strategy

Background Papers

None