

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 8 JANUARY 2008

REPORT BY HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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5. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: (None)

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that (A) the proposals detailed in the report now submitted for Member Development be approved,

(B) the principles for Elected Member Development set out in the East of England Charter be supported and the Council's commitment to obtaining this Charter be confirmed, and

(C) as a consequence of the decision at (B) above, the Chairman of the Council, Chairman of Human Resources Committee and the Chief Executive be requested to sign, on behalf of the Authority, the commitment certificate associated with the East of England Charter for Elected Member Development.

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1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To seek approval for a Member development programme and to commit the Council to obtaining external accreditation for this programme through the East of England Charter for Elected Member Development.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 The report contributes to the following Council key objective.

**Improve the health and sustainability of the organisation.**

3.0 Background

3.1 Members have indicated that they would wish to see a development programme to meet their needs designed and implemented.

## 4.0 Report

4.1 What follows is a draft framework that starts to provide a structure for Member Development. It comprises a number of elements that aim to meet the Council's objectives. Members will wish to determine the content and their preferred method of learning.

## 5.0 Objectives

5.1 It is important for the Council to set out clear objectives for its Member Development programme and that such a programme receives wide cross party endorsement. The following are suggested:

- Co-ordinated member development programme to provide the skills needed to undertake the duties of a councillor;
- Focus on personal performance management and leadership;
- Members to be aware of their responsibilities to keep the Council legally safe;
- Council can demonstrate that there are robust decision making processes and that Members are skilled in managing and participating in those processes;
- Members of the Executive, decision making and regulatory committees are able to discharge their responsibilities effectively;
- Members are effective in their community leadership role;
- Members are able to undertake effective scrutiny;
- Members are well informed of developments within local government;
- Members have the necessary training in using the Council's office and business support;
- Members' induction programme is in place that quickly enables new members to become familiar with the Council and their roles.

## 6.0 Programme

6.1 Set out below is a draft framework that starts to provide a structure for member Development. It comprises a number of elements that start to meet the Council's objectives. Members will wish to determine the content and their preferred method of learning.

- New Councillor induction (following District wide election)

- New Councillor induction (following by-election)
- Mandatory and advisory training
- Personal development training
- Developments in local government

## 7.0 New Councillor Induction

7.1 The 2007 induction programme is attached at Appendix 'A' (Pages 5.6 - 5.8). This programme will be reviewed and revised for the 2011 election. In addition, Members received a handbook and were able to spend time with the Chief Executive discussing their aspirations and were also supported by a senior officer acting as their 'buddy' during the first few weeks.

7.2 New Councillors joining the council following a by-election will have a personal programme tailored for them that will cover all the elements within the general induction. Cllr L O Haysey's paper at Appendix 'B' (Pages 5.9 - 5.10) sets out a proposal for how this will proceed.

## 8.0 Mandatory training

8.1 For regulatory matters, Members will be required to undertake mandatory training prior to serving on the relevant committee and making decisions. For other decision making committees, formal briefings of Members will be undertaken when matters of importance arise that are related to the remit of those committees.

8.2 Other training relating to legislative requirements or significant aspects of, or changes to, Members roles will be provided. Whilst not formally mandatory, attendance of Members is expected so that they can demonstrate they discharge their responsibility for robust governance. Examples of this include our External Auditor's presentation to the Audit Committee on the new Use of Resources criteria and bite sized training for employment matters.

## 9.0 Personal development training

9.1 Members will select their own interests as part of their own personal development. Much of this will be outside the Council's formal Member Develop Programme. Council will support this by providing access to external learning events and resources, e.g. the IDeA website.

9.2 The Council's priority is to run development events that enable

Members to explore how best to discharge their community leadership and scrutiny responsibilities. Council is currently in discussion with IDeA on the design of a programme, run by peer members. Council has also drawn on the expertise of Members who contribute to scrutiny development nationally.

- 9.3 Council will provide support for Members in enhancing their skills in discharging the Council's business effectively – for instance through chairing meetings; using performance management information, public speaking and presentation skills or in using our IT services.
- 9.4 Members may also wish to have some refresher training from time to time – for instance on finance matters or health and safety.

#### 10.0 Developments in local government

- 10.1 Local government is rapidly changing. East Herts Council seeks to make a positive contribution to shaping these changes and will use formal and informal events to do so. Members also have access to the Local Government Association, IDeA and the local government press' thinking on matters of current concern. Examples of this include a planned presentation to Council by the Audit Commission on the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

#### 11.0 Charter for Elected Member Development

- 11.1 Attached at Appendix 'C' (Pages 5.11 - 5.13) is a document that provides an explanation of the Charter, how it works, the standards that need to be achieved and the support and assistance available to the Authority should it commit itself to the Charter.
- 11.2 Council has successfully bid for a subsidy of £1,500 towards the cost of registering for the Charter (the balance of the Charter cost (£1,000) will be met from within existing budgets).
- 11.3 The Committee is invited to approve the Council's registration for the Charter (see recommendations (B) and (C) above). Once registered, a representative of the Employers Organisation will agree a mutually acceptable date for a workshop. The workshop will last approximately 2 hours and will take Members and officers through the Charter, self assessment, expectations and assessment process.

## 12.0 Consultation

12.1 There has been no direct consultation on this matter. The purpose of this report is to commence the engagement process with Members on this matter.

## 13.0 Legal Implications

13.1 There are no legal implications.

## 14.0 Financial Implications

14.1 The costs of obtaining the Charter are to be met from a successful grant bid and utilising existing resources. At this stage, costs around specific Member learning methods and training events are anticipated to be met also from within existing budgets.

## 15.0 Human Resource Implications

15.1 None.

## 16.0 Risk Management Implications

16.1 There are no specific implications. However, a Member Development Programme will undoubtedly assist Council to achieve its objectives by helping improve Member capacity.

## Background Papers

### Charter for Elected Member Development

Contact Officers: Jeff Hughes – Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services – ext 2170  
Anne Freimanis – Chief Executive – ext 1403

Member Induction 2007 Programme

<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Event &amp; Duration</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Lead By</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> May, 6.30 Buffet , programme 7pm – 9pm</b>	Welcome to East Herts	Council Chamber, Wall	
	Welcome address 7pm – 7.15pm		Chairman
	Introduction to the Council 7.15pm – 7.30pm		Anne Freimanis
	How the Council makes decisions 7.30 – 8pm		Simon Drinkwater
	Councillor allowances and support 8pm – 8.45pm		Jeff Hughes/Patrick Newman
	Questions 8.45pm – 9pm		
<b>10<sup>th</sup> May, 6.30 Buffet , programme 7pm – 9pm</b>	Information on the council	Council Chamber, Wallfields	
	Issues from the doorstep 7pm – 7.15pm		Anne Freimanis
	Introduction to the key Community Services 7.15pm – 7.45pm		Directors
	The broader role of the Council 7.45pm – 8pm		Director
	A discussion on supporting the community 8pm – 8.30pm		Philip Hamberger
	General issues 8.30pm - 8.45pm		Jeff Hughes
	Questions 8.45pm – 9pm		

### **Further Events**

Other events should be delivered as bite size chunks of 1 hour preferably before a meeting. We should aim for holding one per week, some of the subjects (not in any particular order) that need to be covered are:

- Code of conduct – perhaps before annual council
- Introduction to scrutiny – before the first scrutiny meeting
- Ethical governance
- The corporate planning process, priorities and budgets
- Media skills
- Specific skills
  - Licensing – before first Licensing Committee
  - Development Control - before the first meeting

As a principal where the information given is not specific to East Herts we should try and join with other authorities to deliver this programme.

This activity should support the content of the member handbook the proof of which should be available from 26<sup>th</sup> April.

<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Event &amp; Duration</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Lead By</b>
<b>17 May 2007</b> <b>4.00 pm –</b> <b>6.00 pm</b>	Licensing training	Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford	Jan Spong/Chris Clowes/Paul Newman
<b>21 May 2007</b> <b>6.30 pm</b> <b>buffet</b> <b>Programme:</b> <b>7.00 pm –</b> <b>9.00 pm</b>	Development Control training	Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford	Kevin Steptoe
<b>22 May 2007</b> <b>6.30pm –</b> <b>7.00 pm</b>	Introduction to scrutiny	Waytemore Room, Council Offices, Bishop's Stortford	Jackie Sayers/Lorraine Blackburn
<b>24 May 2007</b> <b>6.30 pm</b> <b>buffet</b> <b>Programme:</b> <b>7.00 pm –</b> <b>9.00 pm</b>	Integrated service planning and financial planning framework. (7.00 pm – 8.00pm)  Budgets and financial information (8.00 pm - 9.00 pm)	Waytemore Room, Council Offices, Bishop's Stortford	Ceri Pettit

Date & Time	Event & Duration	Venue	Lead By
<b>31 May 2007</b> <b>6.30 pm</b> <b>buffet</b> <b>Programme:</b> <b>7.00 pm –</b> <b>8.00pm</b>	Media skills training	Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford	Lois Prior
<b>5 June 2007</b> <b>6.30 pm</b> <b>buffet</b> <b>Programme:</b> <b>7.00 pm –</b> <b>9.00 pm</b>	Code of Conduct and ethical governance	Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford	Simon Drinkwater



## **Introduction to East Herts Council for New Councillors – comments by Councillor L O Haysey**

(This has been prepared largely for bye-election councillors, based on my experiences, as I believe the systems are in place at election times. This report also includes asides and comments and questions. It is a working document and I consider this to be the first draft. All contributions welcome.)

The (new councillor) NC should be made welcome as soon as possible, their skills exploited and their new enthusiasm harnessed. This is best done by getting them involved quickly.

### **What can I do and what does the Council / Group want from me?**

1. Early contact (within first few days following election) with the new candidate by a nominated member (the executive or the whip). This is to find out the new councillor's CV, their interests and experience, what they would like to achieve during their tenure and how this fits with the opportunities currently available.
2. Early introduction to the member and officer delegated to act as mentor.
3. NC given a 'tick' list of what should happen, who should contact them, training courses that are obligatory and those available. This list should act as a trigger for key departments to get things moving without being prodded.
4. Early contact with Democratic Services so the NC can be instructed in the Code of Conduct and other legal obligations

### **Communication**

The NC must be put into communication loops from day 1. This should happen automatically. The NC does not know what they should know and what they have missed.

1. Early contact by IT department to set up email, group lists on home computers. Continued follow-up to see if the NC is happy with how all is working. Do they know what they should be getting? Accounts and passwords should be set up straight away.
2. Headed paper, business cards and compliment slips
3. Telephone line installation (Is a fax really necessary these days, I have not received anything by fax.)
4. Retrospective communications - Are there key dates or emails that have already been sent out which the NC should be aware of. (May be more tricky to implement unless they are automatically sent the last couple of weeks.)
5. Telephone directory, diary (even if near the end of the year as this contains useful names, addresses and structures)
6. Copy of the constitution.

## **Training**

1. General: Role of councillor, conflicts of interest,
2. Specific for committees: see below
3. Website: Access to intranet, what is on it and how to use it; expenses.
4. IT: Does the NC need any specific introduction to how things work e.g. email

## **Meeting people**

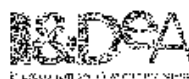
1. Visits to Wallfields, Bishop Stortford (any other?) within the first two/three weeks to see the general operations of the bases. It is also important for officers to meet the NC.
2. Meetings with each Executive members to learn about their roles
3. Meetings with senior personnel and officers to understand how members and officers interact.

## **Introduction to Committees**

1. Early meeting with chairman of committees that NC will be sitting on. This is to help understand how the committee works and its objectives.
2. Is any training necessary in order to fulfil the judicial requirements of any committee, e.g. what should happen in Development Control??
3. Introduction to the officers you will be most in contact with and how the system works.
4. Expected communication stream for this committee, what is available, by hard copy and through email.

## **What do I have to do and how do I do it**

1. How to work with your constituents, rural parish councils
2. Mentor system with a councillor and a senior officer
3. Declarations of interest



**The EERA Charter for Elected Member Development**

The EERA Charter has been developed in partnership with the IDEA and is based on the North West Employers' Charter. Building on the experience of their well established and successful regional Member Development Charter which all councils in that region have made a commitment to.

**The Charter – what is it and why do we need it?**

Any local authority dedicated to meeting the needs of its community must be committed to developing its elected members. The evolving modernisation agenda has placed increasing emphasis on an authority's need to rethink their approach to member support and development. The impact is such that a majority of local authorities across the South East now have some form of support programme in place – however, the approach, levels of commitment, effectiveness and progress varies considerably.

The EERA Charter, therefore, has a number of objectives:

1. Being fully committed to developing Elected Members in order to achieve the council's aims and objectives.
2. Adopting a member led strategic approach to Elected Member development.
3. Having a member learning and development plan in place that clearly identifies the difference development activities will make.
4. Seeing that learning and development is effective in building capacity.
5. Addressing wider development matters to promote work-life balance and citizenship.

**How does the Charter work?**

There are five key stages in working towards the EERA Charter on Elected Member Development.

**Stage 1: Signing up to the Charter and an Action Plan.**

Local authorities who want to participate are required to sign up to the charter to demonstrate their commitment to improving performance, through the development of their Elected Members. At the point of signing up, a local authority must specify a target date by which they will aim to achieve the Charter. The authority will then undertake a self assessment against the Charter criteria and based on the self assessment will develop an Action Plan. The Action Plan will be sent to South East Employers.



**Stage 2: Improving the development of Elected Members**

A local authority will work towards achieving the Charter and meeting the requirements of the Action Plan.

**Stage 3: Assessment**

When a local authority considers it has everything in place to demonstrate it has achieved the Charter they will inform South East Employers who will make a judgement whether the authority is ready for assessment. An on-site assessment will be carried out by a (small) trained team of Elected Members/Officers of South East Employers. A report will be sent to the Council following the assessment visit outlining good practice areas for improvement and whether it has achieved Charter status.

**Stage 4: Awarding the Charter**

When your authority has been assessed and achieved the Charter, they will receive their certificate/award at an annual celebration event.

**Stage 5: Re-assessment**

Once awarded, the Charter has a life span of three years after which a local authority will be required to submit details of how it has sustained the standard. This will be judged by a trained team of Elected Members and Officers undertaking a desk top review.

**Charter Milestones/Standards**

**Commitment to Member development**

- Top political and managerial leadership commitment to development of Elected Members.
- Policy statement.
- Equality of opportunity and access to learning and development.
- Budget.
- Officer resource support.
- Dissemination of learning.

**Strategic approach to Member development**

- Member led strategy.
- Linkage to council corporate plan.
- Member roles clearly set out.
- Process for identification of needs at individual and council wide level.
- Structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities.
- Appropriately learn with external partners.
- Strategy for induction.



- Addresses political leadership and team development.
- Mechanisms for evaluation and informing future plans identified.

**Member learning and development plan in place**

- Addresses development priorities.
- Identify what development activities should achieve.
- Sets out how, when, where and who is responsible.
- Takes account of access to development opportunities.
- Linkage between individual plans and the council's corporate and other plans.
- Representative elected Members consulted.

**Learning and development is effective in building capacity**

- Members learn and develop effectively.
- Learning is shared with other elected Members and where appropriate with officers and stakeholders.
- Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact.
- Identifies (and implements) improvements to learning and development activities.

**Elected Member development promotes work life balance and citizenship**

- Assists those with family responsibilities.
- Reviews how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms.
- Holds events for the community to encourage people to become community leaders.

**Support and Assistance**

Ongoing support will be provided as soon as you commit to the Charter.

- Following commitment you will receive a 'certificate' demonstrating your commitment to meeting the Charter standards.
- An in-authority workshop will be organised to explain to the Elected Members and officers the process of moving towards Charter status.
- Self assessment materials and a Charter commitment pack will be provided to each authority.
- Assessment will be undertaken in the authority where it is seen as ready by the authority and by South East Employers.
- A number of Elected Members from the IDEA Peer Clearing House have been trained as "Peer Assessors"
- A detailed report will be provided to the council outlining good practice and areas for improvement and whether it has achieved Charter status.
- A regional annual celebration event will be organised. A national celebration event is also being considered.
- Total cost £1000 + VAT per authority plus expenses.

