



OFFICER REPORT TO COUNCIL

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

1. To review the Member Development Strategy and agree suggested changes from the Member Development Steering Group.

BACKGROUND:

2. In March 2011, the County Council approved an Elected Member Development Strategy. It was agreed that the strategy would be reviewed every other year, with updates coming to the council in 2013, 2015 and 2017. Accordingly, Member Development Steering Group (chaired by the Deputy Leader) have reviewed the strategy ready for approval at County Council.

STRATEGY REVIEW

3. The Member Services Manager has reviewed the strategy, taking into account a number of relevant documents. These include recommendations from the SEE Charter Plus review of Member Development at Surrey County Council (SCC), the Cratus review of the Member Briefing Programme at SCC and the results of the recent Member Development survey. Relevant council policy has also been taken into account such as the Partnership Commitment, the announcement of the Climate Emergency and the council's Moving Closer to Residents policy.
4. Suggested changes to the strategy are included in the strategy (**attached**) as tracked changes. A summary of the key changes have also been detailed below:

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

5. Both the Charter Plus and Cratus reviews recommended that methods to increase engagement in member development activity should be explored. The current average attendance at member development events is just under 1/3 of members. A new sub-section of the strategy has been included, detailing how the council will look to increase this figure. This includes:
 - a. Hosting member development sessions at a wider range of venues, reducing the travel and time commitments for councillors attending.

- b. Increasing online access to training through supporting members to use skype, improving the usability of member portal and ensuring that members can be recognised for participating in training remotely.
- c. Playing a stronger role in quality assuring member briefing and training sessions, so that councillors feel that time invested in development at SCC is time well spent.

MEMBER 1-1s

- 6. Member 1-1s were introduced after the 2017 election to support councillors in identifying training and development needs. These sessions received good feedback from members who participated and it is suggested that they are now relaunched and embedded as business as usual. This was the first recommendation of the Charter Plus review, which cited member 1-1s as a key way of engaging councillors in development activity.
- 7. The revised strategy commits the council to offering every member a 1-1 within 6 months of joining the council and then annually thereafter. As well as providing the opportunity to discuss training and development needs, the scope of the 1-1s will be widened so that members have the opportunity to discuss difficult community or casework issues with officers, who can signpost councillors to services/organisations who can assist. The member 1-1s will be led either the Member Services Manager or a colleague from the Democratic Services or Community Partnerships Senior Management Teams.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ROLE

- 8. The strategy also includes a Learning and Development Plan which sets out what member development activity will be offered across the four year term (**appendix 1 of the strategy**). This framework has been revised and one of the key additions is the introduction of a new 'Community Leadership' module as part of the induction.
- 9. The introduction of this module is in line with SCC's 'Partnership Commitment' (approved by Council in May 2019) which set out how the council intends to work successfully with partners and enable residents to play a greater role in improving their communities
- 10. County councillors can play a key role in supporting the delivering of the Partnership Commitment. For example, they can act as an interface between their local area and the council, using their knowledge to facilitate effective communication between the two. They can also support local organisations and residents to problem solve, and empower them to help themselves and each other at a neighbourhood level.
- 11. Many members will already possess many key community leadership skills – in fact, their natural aptitude in this area may be what has driven to become a

councillor. However, others will benefit from training and development to support them in fulfilling their community leadership role.

12. Therefore, it is proposed that a Community Leadership module forms an integral part of the next induction programme. This module should include training on areas such as handling resident casework, facilitation/negotiation skills and community engagement. Other complimentary courses could include social media skills, personal resilience and public speaking.
13. Training resources will be developed in conjunction with colleagues at the LGA and Mark Palmer, Development Director at South East Employers who has supported member development at the council over a number of years. Through employing a variety of training methods, such as classroom training, e-learning and distance learning workbooks, this additional provision should be provided within the existing the member development budget of £20k.

PROTOCOL FOR EXTERNAL TRAINING COURSES

14. A protocol (**appendix 3 of the strategy**) is currently in place whereby external training applications are approved by the Member Services Manager in conjunction with the Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group and the Monitoring Officer. It is suggested that this process is streamlined so that approvals are made by the Member Services Manager, with the Chairman of the MDSG and Monitoring Officer only consulted on training applications which are declined. A summary of all training applications will be shared with the MDSG on a quarterly basis to ensure that the process is fair and transparent.

ROLE PROFILE

15. The County Councillor role profiles (**appendix 2 of the strategy**) have been amended so that they reflect current council terminology. Additional emphasis has been placed on a member's community leadership role in the general County Councillor role profile.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

16. That the revised Member Development Strategy is approved by County Council.

Lead/Contact Officers: Rachel Basham, Member Services Manager, Democratic Services

Sources/background papers:

Elected Member Development Strategy (Revised November 2019)

Elected Member Development Strategy – Appendix 1 (Four Year Learning and Development Plan)
Elected Member Development Strategy – Appendix 2 (Councillor Role Profiles)
Elected Member Development Strategy – Appendix 3 (Protocol for Elected Member Attendance at External Training and Conferences)
