

Member Development

Report by Councillor John Aldridge, Cabinet Member for Adults Social Care.
Lead Member for Member Development.

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Purpose of report

To provide an update on Member Development since December 2011 and progress towards the Member Development Charter

Background and progress

At Full Council in December 2011, Members of the Council formally committed to the East of England Member Development Charter and confirmed the Member Development Strategy. It was also confirmed that the Member Development Steering Group would lead and oversee the work towards the Charter. The East of England Member Development Charter provides a robust, structured framework designed to enhance and hone member development to ensure Members can effectively undertake their role/s.

In December 2011 a self-assessment/action plan set against the Charter criteria was submitted to the South East Employers (SEE), (who assess Authorities in the South East and East of England on their progress against the Charter) for review, the Council received confirmation that the assessor was happy with the actions and self-assessment. Also in December, we circulated Personal Development Plan (PDP) Questionnaires to all Members, 73 completed questionnaires were returned by the end of February. Since February, a number of Personal Development Plan discussions have taken place with Members and Officers which has led to 40 plans now being in place (as of 18/06/12).

Under the direction of the Member Development Steering Group, Joanna Boaler, (Member Support Manager) has been working through the actions from the self-assessment and the information gathered from the PDP questionnaires and one-to-ones. From this a skills development programme has been prepared which started in June. The skills programme includes key topics identified by Members, such as Public Speaking, Preparing for and Chairing Meetings and Speed/Effective Reading. The skills sessions will initially be offered to those Members who requested this aspect of personal development, before being offered to all Members. The feedback from these sessions so far has been excellent.

The Member Development Programme in 2012 to-date has been varied, covering key strategic issues and provided support to Members. Important sessions included briefings on the Whole Place Community Budget, Health and Wellbeing, Waste Strategy, Education, the Localism Act and the Big Society Fund. We have also held the usual regular IT drop-ins following Full Council and sessions for Members to complete the Corporate Governance e-learning modules.

Attendance in 2012 has been good to-date with an average of 25 Members attending each of the briefing sessions. With a significant number of sessions having over 30 or 40 Members in attendance.

Over the coming months, further Member Development actions will be undertaken as we continue to work together towards achieving the Charter. It is hoped that by the spring 2013 we will be in a position to demonstrate that we have met the Charter requirements.