

AGENDA ITEM 8	
ES/05/13	
Committee:	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 January 2012
East of England Member Development Charter	
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1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is provide an update on the progress made with Essex County Council achieving the East of England Member Development Charter.

2. Committee recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the progress made with the East of England Member Development Charter and make any comments or observations, to ensure that Essex County Council are ready for the assessment in March 2013.

3. Background and context

In December 2011, a paper went to Full Council regarding the East of England Member Development Charter, at that meeting, Members agreed to commit to the Member Development Charter with a view to achieving it in advance of the elections in May 2013.

The East of England Member Development Charter has been developed in partnership with the Local Government Group. The Charter aims to promote best practice in member development.

The East of England Charter 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. Seeing that learning and development is effective in building capacity;
4. Addressing wider development matters to support councillors;

As Essex County Council already had a Member Development Programme in place, the Council formally signed up to the Charter and endorsed the objectives of the Charter into the Essex County Council Member Development Strategy.

In December 2011 the Council signed up for the Charter and submitted a self-assessment against the criteria and an action plan for meeting them.

Full Council appointed the already established Member Development Steering Group, led by Councillor John Aldridge to continue to oversee Member Development and also the progress towards achieving Charter accreditation.

Since December 2011, the Member Development Steering Group and the Member Support Manager have been working towards meeting the criteria to achieve the Member Development Charter.

4. Current position and progress

Work has been progressing well over the last 12 months in meeting the requirements of the Charter.

The Member Development Steering Group in November 2012, agreed that the date of the assessment should be scheduled for March 2013. The date of the on-site assessment is 5 March 2013. The assessment will be carried out by a trained team of elected members and officers.

In advance of the assessment the self-assessment and a portfolio of evidence will be submitted to the assessment team.

The assessment team will come in for the day and undertake a series of interviews with the following:

- Project Manager – Joanna Boaler and Colin Ismay
- Leader of the Council
- Leaders of the Opposition Groups
- Member Development Steering Group
- Frontline Officer – Paul Bird
- Deputy Chief Executive – Robert Overall
- Workshop with a mixture of Councillors

Following the assessment, a comprehensive report will be produced following the visit. If we are successful and awarded Charter Status, a certificate will then be issued.

Should we be successful after three years, reassessment will take place to ensure on-going commitment to the Charter. We would also have the opportunity to consider

working towards the Charter Plus. Charter Plus is based on the same criteria as the Charter, although evidence requirements and the assessment process are more rigorous.

8. Conclusions

We are in a good position to be awarded Charter Status following the assessment in March. The Member Development Steering Group will continue to oversee the work towards achieving Charter Status in March 2013.

Support from across all parties and all members has been strong to-date, particularly from the Member Development Steering Group, the Leader and his Cabinet. It is certainly more difficult going to assessment in the year of the election, nevertheless the support and dedication from members remains high.

The self-assessment report as Appendix 1, provides a detailed account of the work to-date and any outstanding actions.