CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Briefing note on member learning and development

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date: 16 June 2010

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bowyer

CMT Member: Adam Broome

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Part: 1

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1. Introduction

1.1 This briefing note highlights the key achievements in member learning and development in the period 2009 to 2010. The briefing note then explores ongoing work in this area and some of the future challenges. More information about member learning and development can be accessed on the Members' Room.

2. Key achievements in 2009 to 2010

2.1 The following key achievements were noted in the period under consideration:

- The Member Development Strategy, Member Development Programme 2009 to 2010, and the Member Skills' Framework were agreed by Cabinet on 10 February 2009.
- The cross-party Supporting Members' Group (SMG) arose from the former Members' Development Group and Members' ICT Group, and the first meeting was held on 8 July 2009. The Group meets monthly to consider support issues that affect councillors, including learning and development, and ICT. The SMG is chaired by the Cabinet member with responsibility for democracy and governance, while the membership also includes the Cabinet member with responsibility for ICT.
- The Members' Room on the intranet has been updated with the long term intention of providing a 'one stop shop' information and learning resource for councillors.
- Member personal webpages have been made available, with one to one training in creation and maintenance provided.
- Member ICT solution options have been agreed, including the provision of BlackBerry devices.

- Evaluation of all member learning events is now undertaken, and an annual member learning and development evaluation report is presented to the SMG to help monitor and develop these activities.
- A programme of cross-authority member learning opportunities funded by the Devon Improvement Programme has begun, with the successful 'One Step Beyond' scrutiny conference held in Plymouth on 13 November 2009.
- A new format for member introduction was introduced in 2010, which included the provision of 'officer buddies' for newly elected members and distribution of the booklet, 'A Councillor's Early Survival Guide'.
- At the instigation of the SMG, a well received series of ICT member workshops was held at the end of 2009 and into early 2010, with the emphasis on one to one or small group learning.
- The Supporting Members' Group now considers applications from departments and outside organisations requesting briefings and workshops involving all councillors in order to make these more 'member-led' and fit for purpose.
- Plymouth City Council continues to work towards achieving the South West Charter for Member Development.

3. Ongoing work and future challenges

3.1 The following issues highlight the ongoing work in member learning and development as well as some of the future challenges to be addressed:

- In June and July 2010, all members will be offered the opportunity of discussing their learning and development needs in a relaxed and confidential setting, and participating in drawing up individual development plans.
- A member learning action plan will be devised using agreed individual member development plans, which will then be presented to the SMG for agreement and subsequent implementation.
- A variety of activities will be organised for Local Democracy Week in October 2010, building on the success of Local Democracy Week 2009.
- In 2010, the Member Development Strategy will be revised and updated, and the Member Development Programme produced in a different format and appropriately amended to reflect a changing content.
- There will be ongoing work with scrutiny to ensure that good practice in member learning is encouraged and developed within this discipline.
- Progress will be ongoing towards achieving Charter status.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the briefing note is noted.