St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Renewal Working Party
13 September 2012

Member Development: Update

1.   Summary and Reasons for Recommendations
1.1   Delivering and planning the 2012/2013 Member Development Programme 1.1.1   A report on delivery to date and an update on progress with the delivery of the agreed Member Development Programme as approved at the last meeting. A schedule of forthcoming events dates and locations **Appendix A.** **1.2   Recording attendance and evaluating quality of Member Development Events** 1.2.1   An update and explanation of the change in process for recording Member attendance on the HR system "i-trent" for ease of reporting. A proposed change to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for evaluation purposes with reference to merging current practice. Proposed evaluation form **Appendix B.** **1.3   Summary of attendance at SEE (South East Employers) Network meeting – 3 July 2012** 1.3.1   A report to Members from attendance of the July 2012 meeting of the Charter for Elected Member Development Network. A summary of the activities covered and future innovations discussed and their implications for Members. **1.4   Joint Member Development Group** 1.4.1   An outline of a proposal to set up an informal group comprising of Members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Member Development Programme to meet current and future requirements. **1.5   Member Development Budget** 1.5.1   Action 6 of the Member Development Charter Action Plan asks that the Working Party be kept up to date with the budget for Member Development. The current status of this year's Member Development budget is provided at **Appendix C** for Members' information and discussion as necessary.

2.	Recommendations

The Working Party is asked to:

2.1 Delivering and setting the 2012/2013 Member Development Programme (Appendix A)

2.1.1 Discuss progress of the current Member Development programme. Discuss sharing "Speed reading techniques" session with officers.

2.2 Recording attendance and evaluating quality of Member Development Events (Appendix B)

2.2.1 Discuss the use of a more quantitative method of collecting information provided on course evaluation sheets following attendance at Member Development events.

2.2.2 **The Working Party is asked to agree the replacement of the current evaluation form with that shown at Appendix B1, subject to any agreed changes from the meeting.**

2.2.3 **The Working Party is also asked to advise officers what information it would like to see made available to Members once training records begin to be recorded on the "i-Trent" HR system, both on a general and individual level.**

2.3 Summary of attendance at SEE

2.3.1 Notification of current best practice as discussed at the Network meeting attended by Learning and Development Manager.

2.4 Joint Member Development Group

2.4.1 Discuss the proposal to have an informal Member Development Group made up of Members from Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC.

2.4.2 **The Working Party is asked to nominate two Members to sit on the Joint Member Development Group.**

2.5 Member Development Budget (Appendix C)

2.5.1 Discuss the use of the Member Development budget and advise officers whether the budget is being allocated appropriately.

Contact Details	Chairman	Lead Officer - Learning and Development Manager
Name	To be elected	Gillian Page
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3.	**Corporate Priorities**

3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-

Priority 2: Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities
Priority 3: Working together for an efficient council.

4.	**Key Issues /Report**

4.1 Delivering and setting the 2012/2013 Member Development Programme

4.1.1 As requested at the last meeting of the Working Party a programme of events has been developed reflecting the areas identified through the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and Corporate priorities.

4.1.2 The programme started with a visit to Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) hosted by Sharon Jones and her team. Twelve Members visited Breckland House, Thetford for an update on the partnership process and a presentation that covered forthcoming changes that affect Non Domestic Rates, Council Tax and Housing Benefits. This was followed by an event on Local Government Finance delivered by key officers. The event built on and expanded on the issues covered in the visit to ARP. This event was delivered at both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath and each event was attended by 9 Members from each Council. Due to the complexity of the subject areas covered in these events and the speed of change an update session has been scheduled for 10 October 2012. It will cover Localisation of Council Tax and Business Rates and Business Process Reengineering and Customer Access. This session will be held at West Stow with a half hour dedicated to informal discussion and networking for Members.

4.1.3 Prior to attendance at events, Members who have indicated they will be attending are sent reminders and relevant documents, along with internet and intranet links designed to support understanding of the subject areas. The attached diary of events at Appendix A shows the committed dates to 29 January 2013. The remaining subject areas to be covered will be allocated a date from those agreed, and further sessions will be scheduled as required.

4.1.4 It is proposed to deliver a speed reading event in December 2012 which, dependant on numbers and if Members agree, will be opened to officers.

4.1.5 It is proposed to offer "software surgeries" where Members can drop in and receive help and advice on using Microsoft Office programs from specialist members of staff. It is proposed to have these "surgeries" prior to key meetings starting at 2 pm in the IT training suite on a drop-in one-to-one basis.

4.1.6 Following the restructure, an event entitled Understanding the Organisation will be delivered for Members at Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. It is anticipated that this will be scheduled for January 2013.

4.2 Recording attendance and evaluating quality of Member Development Events

4.2.1 Following the handover of responsibility for the management of Member training for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath to the Learning and Development team there are a number of efficiencies in the processes that can be achieved. With the merger of the HR system used in both organisations called i-trent, learning activities and attendance can

be recorded on the data base. Individual training records of employees and Members will be maintained. Members will also be able to request a record of the training they have attended. It will make the reporting process on Member attendance easier and quicker to deliver, but it would be helpful to know from the Working Party what information will be required at a general and at an individual level.

4.2.2 It is also proposed to move to both quantitative and qualitative method of recording evaluation information. The proposed evaluation form attached at Appendix B1 allows the collection of information for numerical assessment, and also allows for comments and general observations which are also a very important part of the evaluation process. The existing form is attached at Appendix B2 for comparison.

4.3 Summary of attendance at SEE (South East Employers) Network meting – 3 July 2012

4.3.1 The Network meeting covered a full agenda, with colleagues from 30 Councils attending from the South East of the UK. Introduced by Mark Palmer, Development Director, he gave the National picture on Charter achievement with 210 Councils committed and 63% achieving the Charter last year, and the regional picture with 28 commitments and 19 achieved Charter and 2 taking on Charter Plus.

4.3.2 Martin Stein from East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) delivered a thought provoking presentation on the value of the Vine East e-learning platform for Member Development, illustrating the economic and pedagogic advantages of using this shared resource. We will launch this for officers and staff in the Autumn, and hope to have a Members training area set up for early 2013.

4.3.3 Mark Palmer then delivered a presentation looking at the impact of the Localism Act. He looked at the range of skills required by Members' building partnerships and becoming community facilitators. There were many unanswered questions, but a lively discussion ensued as to how to deliver and ensure that Members are equipped with the knowledge and skills required.

4.3.4 The afternoon ended with Jason Person from Mid Sussex District Council talking about their experience of providing every Member with an I-Pad, and how this is being used as both a communication and a learning tool. He is coming to the end of a successful pilot scheme, and his Council is about to issue all Members with I-Pads based on the success of this.

4.4 Joint Member Development Group

4.4.1 At present both Councils engage Members in driving their Member development programme through different consultation routes. FHDC has an informal Members development group which consists of 6 Members (4 from the controlling party and 2 from the opposition) plus the Learning and Development Manager. At SEBC the Democratic Renewal Working Party is the representative group. Both groups assist to shape/champion Member Development.

4.4.2 It may be sensible to widen the membership of Forest Heath's informal Member/officer group to a joint one, which looks at Member learning and development.

4.4.3 It is proposed that a couple of St Edmundsbury Councillors (ideally including the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Renewal Party) should be added to this existing group. The group would meet bi-monthly, and assist with a shared Member Development Programme and initiatives across the Councils.

4.5	**Member Development Budget – Appendix C**

4.5.1   Budget 0610 1290

This budget has had no expenditure to date due to training events being delivered by key officers internally. Members are reminded that some coming events will be commissioned externally, eg speed reading, Overview and Scrutiny questioning and listening skills and influencing and negotiating. Committed budget so far for events commissioned in the coming months is £1,525. Some economies will be achieved through the sharing of costs with FHDC.

4.5.2   Budget 0610 3850

It should be noted that at 6 months the budget is more than 50% spent, standing at 73%. However, a number of annual conferences have been accounted for and it would be expected that the number of requests to attend events will reduce during the winter and Christmas months. This budget will continue to be monitored closely.

5.	**Other Options considered**

5.1   Not applicable.

6.	**Community Impact**

6.1   **Crime and Disorder Impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1   Not applicable.

6.2   **Diversity and Equality Impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1   Underpinning all delivery of specialist subjects is an understanding by facilitators of the Diversity and Equality issues and the impact of these on the wider community.

6.3   **Sustainability Impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1   Underpinning all delivery of specialist subjects is an understanding by facilitators of the environmental and economic sustainability issues and the impact of these on the wider community.

7.	**Consultation** *(refer to the Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy)*

7.1   Members are consulted via Training Needs Analysis form and discussion.

8.	**Resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1   As detailed in the report, the Member Development budgets do not go beyond the scope of the current budget provision.

9. Risk/Opportunity Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
	High/Medium/Low		High/Medium/Low
Maintaining knowledge and understanding	Medium	Attendance at relevant and focused learning events to increase knowledge and enhance understanding .	Low
Member Engagement	Medium	Clear information on delivery of Events communicated via Members' bulletin. Ensure relevance of subject areas and delivery method and times are suitable.	Low

10. Legal or policy implications

10.1 The current Member Development Programme maintains up-to-date understanding of legal issues relevant to: New Standards, Data Protection and Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements.

10.2 The Programme also ensures good background knowledge to support policy decisions.

Wards affected	ALL
Background Papers	None

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Member Development planning diary 2012 _2013

Attendance	Dates	Subject	Facilitator/Provider	Location
12 Members (9 - SEDSBC & 3 FHDC)	26/06/2012	Anglia Revenues Partnership	Sharon Jones - ARP	ARP
9 Members - SEDSBC	18/07/2012	Local Govt Finance (LGF)	Liz Watts - Lynda Pope - Sharon Jones	West Suffolk House -Conference Chamber West
9 Members - FHDC	01/08/2012	Local Govt Finance (LGF)	Liz Watts - Lynda Pope - Sharon Jones	FHDC Chamber
	24/09/2012	Data Protection and Freedom of Information	Peter Heard Joy Bowes, Teresa Halliday, Jenny Devane	West Suffolk House Conference Chamber West
	25/09/2012	Anglia Revenues Partnership Visit (2nd opportunity)	Sharon Jones - ARP	ARP
	10/10/2012	LGF Update - Localisation of Council tax and Business Rates	Liz Watts - Lynda Pope - Sharon Jones	West Stow Education
	10/10/2012	Business Process Reengineering and Customer Access	Liz Watts - Davina - Lynda - Sharon	West Stow Education
	22/10/2012	Emergency Planning for Ward Members	Alan Points - Andrew Claydon	FHDC Chamber
	TBA	Business Process Re-engineering and Customer Access	Liz Watts - Lynda Pope - Davina - Sharon	TBA
	27/11/2012	New Standards Regime	Joy Bowes and Peter Heard	West Suffolk House Conference Room (West)
	Dec	Speed reading	External	WSF
	29/01/2013	Scrutiny Questioning and Listening Skills	External - Institute of Local Government Studies	FHDC Chamber
	20/02/2013	TBA		
	26/03/2013	TBA		
	22/04/2013	TBA		
	28/05/2013	TBA		

To commission external		
Handling challenging situations and people		
Influencing and negotiating skills		
Time Management/Work Life Balance.		
Slot in:		
New Social Housing reforms and financial implications		
Development Control and Licensing training		
Localism and community leadership		
Drop in IT Help and advice sessions Microsoft Office programs	Internal Officers	IT Training room
Shared Services briefings	Louise Hammond to advise	
Business Process Reengineering and Customer Access	Liz Watts - Davina - Lynda - Sharon	
Understanding the organisation (following restructure)	Louise Hammond to advise on dates	

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Learning & Development Evaluation Sheet

Thank you for attending this Learning & Development event. We ask you to take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form. Your opinion is very important to us as it helps to ensure that our development programme is as beneficial to you as possible.

LEARNING EVENT:		DATE:	

1. **Did the course fulfil its stated aims and objectives?** Yes ☐ No ☐
2. **Did the course meet your expectations?** Yes ☐ No ☐

3. **How interesting was the course?**

Not at all interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very interesting

4. **How useful was the course?**

Not at all useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very useful

5. **Please rate the following:**

Trainer's style	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Trainer's knowledge	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Venue	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Course admin (info, invites, etc)	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Pace of course	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Relevance to my job	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
Time keeping	Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent

6. **What did you find most useful about the course?**

7. **What could be improved about the course?**

8. **How would you rate the course overall?**

Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent

9. **Have you got any other comments about the course or about Learning & Development in general?**

Name.. Department...

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Please return it to the trainer or to HR.

Member Development activity evaluation form

Name	
Title of event	Local Government Finance
Date of event	18 July 2012
Duration	2 hours

Did this development activity fulfil the aims and objectives of the course as you understood them? *(tick one box only)*

Fully		Largely		In part		Not fulfilled	

If you selected "In part" or "Not fulfilled" please indicate where you felt the aims and objectives were not met.

As a result of attending this event have you identified a need for further development activity in this area? YES/NO If Yes please give details

What was the single most important piece of learning you gained from this activity?

Was the time/cost of attending this course justified by what you gained from it?

YES/NO

Would you recommend this activity to others? YES/NO

Are there important learning points or information you gained from attending this course which it would be appropriate to share with other Members? YES/NO

If YES please give details.

Signed	
Date	

Returning this form
Please return this form to Juliet Fulford – Learning and Development

Member Development Budgets 2012/2013: Expenses paid or planned for 2012/2013

0610 1290 – Training Expenses – budget £8,100

Date	Detail	Cost £
	No externally provided training yet commissioned for 2012/13	0.00
Total spend to date		

0610 3850 – Conference Expenses – budget £2,900

Date	Detail	Cost £
April 2012	Member expenses April	324.10
June 2012	LGA conference accommodation	372.20
July 2012	Two places LGA Welfare Reform Act conference	398.00
July 2012	Rural conference accommodation	300.00
July 2012	LGA conference attendance	495.00
Sept 2012	LGA Annual Rural Conference	229.00
Total spend to date		**£2,118.30**