



COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 May 2019

ADOPTION OF A MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER FOR EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The former Waveney District Council (WDC) was first accredited with the 'Charter Mark' for Member Development in February 2009 and it was subsequently awarded 'Charter Plus' status in November 2009. Successful re-assessments were undertaken in 2011, 2014 and 2017.
2. At the end of the re-assessment day in 2017, the assessors advised WDC that, subject to agreement, the Charter Plus status would transfer to the new East Suffolk Council (ESC) which was to be formed in 2019. This would be valid for one year, following which a re-assessment for the ESC would be required, in mid 2020.
3. In June 2018, the Member Programme Board, which was formed as part of the One Council Programme, to oversee the creation of the ESC, confirmed that it would be beneficial for the ESC to retain the Charter Plus Award for Elected Member Development.
4. Members are asked to confirm that they wish to adopt the Member Development Charter for ESC.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
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Cabinet Member:	To be confirmed
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Supporting Officer:	Hilary Slater Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer 01394 444336 hilary.slater@eastsuffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Formal assessment for the 'Charter Mark' and 'Charter Plus' for Member Development is undertaken by the South East Employers Association (SEEMP). To pass the assessment, the Council must show a strategic approach to Member Development and a constant commitment to learning.
- 1.2 The re-assessment was undertaken on 21 June 2017 and WDC was informed that it had been successful in re-achieving Charter Plus status for a further three years.
- 1.3 The re-assessment involved interviews with Members, officers and partner organisations including the Leader of the Council, the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) and Leaders of the Minority Groups, the Chief Executive, lead officers for Member Development and the Lead Member for Member Development.
- 1.4 The re-assessment was extremely positive and highlighted a number of priorities for the future, many of which have subsequently been completed:
 - A shadow Member Development Steering Group should be established by September 2018 to lead the member development element of the transition to the new organisation. They should focus on preparation for the induction and new roles.
 - A Be a Councillor Event should take place in 2018 to encourage people to stand on the new Council and this should be followed by a candidate event in March 2019.
 - New role descriptions for all SRA roles should be developed as well as the role of a community councillor, giving consideration to the new ward areas and working arrangements.
 - Further development to support new locality arrangements is required particularly in areas recently parished.
 - PDPs should be refreshed for all councillors by September 2019 onward.
 - The establishment of a change management programme to support members in the transition will be vital.
 - To develop a member mentor programme with trained mentors who will be able to support new councillors from May 2019.
 - Councillors should be more outward looking; member involvement in peer reviews should be encouraged.
 - An enhanced Leadership offer for the new Council and those in new roles should be developed.

2 ADOPTION OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

- 2.1 Subject to agreement, the Charter Plus status will transfer to the ESC and will be valid for one year. A further re-assessment for ESC will be required in mid 2020.
- 2.2 Members are therefore asked to confirm that they wish to adopt the Member Development Charter for the ESC and undertake the re-assessment for Charter Plus in 2020.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The Member Development Strategy acknowledges that Councillors have a key role in achieving the vision set out in the East Suffolk Business Plan. The Council is committed to supporting Councillor's learning and development needs, ensuring that all Members have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to effectively carry out their community leadership roles. This commitment supports the Business Plan objectives of Enabling Communities, Financial Self Sufficiency and Economic Growth, to the benefit of everyone in East Suffolk.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Member Development Steering Group oversees a budget of £50,000 over a four year period for Member Development activity. In order to make the best use of funds at the appropriate times, the budget has been profiled over a four year period. Greater funds are made available in the municipal year immediately after the District Council elections, and less funding in the years leading up to the elections.
- 4.2 There are also funds set aside within the Democratic Services budget to cover the costs of the Charter Plus Award Membership and the Inspection. There is also sufficient capacity within the Democratic Services Team to support Member Development and the Member Development Steering Group.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Member Development is a key element in ensuring that Councillors are offered the necessary support, guidance and training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively in accordance with good governance and to the benefit of the community.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation was undertaken with the Member Programme Board, to seek their views on whether or not ESC would retain the Charter Plus Award for Member Development.
- 6.2 The ESC Members are now asked to confirm that they wish to retain the Charter Plus Award for Member Development.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The option not to provide a Member Development Programme was rejected. The Member Programme Board, the Shadow Authority and the Shadow Member Development Steering Group recognised the benefits of having the Member Development Charter, and the commitment which it provides to on-going learning and development. This, in turn, may enhance the skills which councillors bring to their role, and assist them in terms of community leadership. This will be particularly important in the early years of the new Council, when Members will be familiarising themselves with the social, economic and demographic issues of ESC, and the challenges that they bring.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To ensure the continuing commitment to Member Development and to provide Councillors with the support, training and development which they may need to carry out their roles effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the East Suffolk Council

- A) adopts the Charter Plus Award for Member Development and will undertake the outstanding recommendations made by SEEMP during the last re-assessment in 2017.
- B) will undertake a re-assessment for the Charter Plus Award for Member Development in mid 2020.
- C) will appoint a Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) to oversee the Member Development training programme and the Charter Plus re-assessment. The Membership of the MDSG will consist of representation from the different political parties on the Council and they will meet on a regular basis.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Member Development Programme 2019-23

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None