SUBJECT: **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

DIRECTORATE: **DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

LEAD OFFICER: **CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)**

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1.   **Purpose of Report**

1.1   To provide members with an update on the delivery of member development within the Council. The Council is committed to developing its councillors to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles in the most effective manner. The member development programme is a key part of this process, and this report provides a summary of the current position for members' consideration. It also provides an opportunity for members to directly feed into and shape the member development process.

2.   **2014/15 Summary**

2.1   In addition to *ad hoc* workshops and seminars covering consultations with members and briefings on areas of Council business, training in the following areas has been or will be delivered during 2014/15:

- Planning Committee. All Planning Committee members are required to attend this annual refresher course reminding councillors of the key principles and factors to bear in mind when making planning decisions.
- Licensing Act 2003. In common with the Planning Committee, all councillors who sit on the sub-committees of the Licensing Committee must attend training to ensure decisions are made fairly and in keeping with the law.
- Safeguarding. A number of sessions were held throughout the year to reach as many councillors as possible to ensure they were able to recognise how best to protect vulnerable young people and adults from harm and to be aware of the signs of potential abuse.
- Dementia Friends. Working in concert with the Alzheimer's Society, training will be held allowing councillors to become 'Dementia Friends', improving members' awareness of and capacity to support people with the various forms of dementia.
- Local Government Finance. In addition to a member briefing regarding arrangements for the 2015/16 budget, members were given a general briefing on the operation of local government finance.
- Equality & Diversity Refresher. At the request of the Equality and Diversity Group, members were given the opportunity to attend refresher training regarding equality and diversity.
- Media Training. Half-day training was provided for members regarding interacting with the press and radio, with a particular focus on interviewing skills.

2.2   The Council has also provided opportunities for councillors to attend relevant training and briefing events with organisations such as the Local Government East Midlands, as well as offering the opportunity to attend training events organised collaboratively with other local authorities in Lincolnshire. However, locally-hosted events continue to form the focus of the member development programme, as is likely to be the case in 2015/16.

3.   New Member Inductions

3.1   Elections for 11 Council seats are scheduled to take place on 7 May 2015. Until the result of the election are known it is unclear whether inductions will need to be provided for any new members and, if so, how many new members.

3.2   As the Council elects by thirds, the frequency of induction events is three times higher than in local authorities which elect using all-out elections. This means that induction events tend to be provided in-house in order to protect the member development budget for broader training throughout the year.

3.3   With this limitation in mind, officers are continuing to seek to ensure that the induction process does the most effective job possible in providing councillors with the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles in a cost-effective manner. Having made significant changes to the induction process in 2014/15 by spreading the induction process over two days rather than one, it is proposed that this model will be used again in 2015/16.

3.4   This change has allowed officers from across the Council to have considerably more involvement with new members than in the past. The 'meet the officers' sessions trialled in the previous year gave members the chance to directly question representatives from the areas which councillors use most frequently, allowing a valuable opportunity to understand the responsibilities of the service and how to address a variety of concerns which residents may raise with them. General feedback from members attending these sessions was positive, although such sessions can prove too basic for members with previous experience of local government.

3.5   The 2015/16 member induction is scheduled to take place over two days following the May election using the following provisional schedule:

Monday, 11 May 2015
    10:00   Formalities, including:
                    • Issuing of City Hall access cards
                    • Taking photographs for Council material
    12:30   Lunch break
    13:30   Meet the Officers I
    15:00   Member Code of Conduct and Meeting Procedure Rules Briefing
    15:45   Close

Tuesday, 12 May 2015
    10:00   An introduction to scrutiny
    11:00   Meet the Officers II
    12:20   Lunch break
    13:20   Introduction to Equality and Diversity
    14:20   Meet the Officers III
    15:45   Close

3.6 As in previous years, new members will be requested to complete a Personal Development Profile with a member of the Democratic Services team to shape any more detailed training which may need to be provided either for individual councillors or for newly-elected members as a group. Wherever possible, training opportunities will also be made available to existing members.

3.7 The Member Induction Pack provided to new members on entering the Council was also significantly re-worked in the previous year to remove extraneous content and provide additional practical tips for councillors seeking to understand how best to navigate the Council's various services. The Member Induction Pack from 2014/15 is provided as **Appendix A** for any feedback from members regarding potential improvements.

3.8 In addition to the member development events put forward for any new members, suggestions and requests for any further development areas are invited from committee members. Following consideration by the Ethics and Engagement Committee other elected members will also be invited to put forward any requests for member development in 2015/16.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance
Any suggested changes to the delivery of or support for member development must be funded from within its existing budget.

4.2 Legal Implications
There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That members note the current status of member development.

5.2 That members provide feedback on the operation of member development, including any specific guidance on the training areas to be delivered during 2014/15 and in the new municipal year.