

SUBJECT:	FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER:	CAROLYN WHEATER, CITY SOLICITOR

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The Council has a dedicated budget for funding member development, which is overseen by the Principal Democratic Officer. This report seeks members' views on codifying arrangements for determining which individual development requests should be funded.

2. Current Arrangements

2.1 The Council has a member development budget to support training and general development for councillors. The majority of the budget is usually spent on providing training events from which all councillors can benefit. However, there is also scope for individual members to attend development sessions which other elected members will be unable to access, either owing to cost, limited places being available, or the specific nature of the session.

2.2 In recent years, the Council has paid for development opportunities including leadership training, courses for new councillors, and specialised training for particular committees or roles.

2.3 The provision of this training is arranged on an *ad hoc* basis, as it is often difficult to forecast whether particular development will be required and whether a particular councillor would be interested in

3. Protocol for Funding Individual Member Development

3.1 In order to assist both councillors and officers in ensuring that member development is provided in a fair and transparent manner, it is proposed that a short protocol should be adopted setting out the framework for individual member development requests.

3.2 The protocol proposed below reflects the principles and factors which the Principal Democratic Officer already considers when a request is currently made. However, by ensuring that members have considered and endorsed the general framework, it is hoped that the protocol will clearly demonstrate to the public and members that any requests are being considered in a proper manner.

3.3 The proposed protocol is built around three basic principles which should be applied to every request made. If none of the principles are breached by the request, the relevant officer should then consider the factors set out below in determining whether to grant the request. The factors also allow a decision to be properly

weighted if multiple requests are being considered and cannot all be funded.

3.4 Principles

- The Member Development Budget is primarily intended to support training and development, but may also be used to fund councillors' participation in other events which will benefit the Council.
- Any requests to take part in a relevant event must be referred to the Principal Democratic Officer, the Legal and Democratic Services Manager, or the City Solicitor for determination.
- An individual department may also choose to fund member development and other councillor activities, but should do so using its own resources and having regard to the relevant factors below.

3.5 Factors (in order of priority):

1. The amount allocated to and remaining in the annual member development budget.
2. The cost and likely value to the Council in having a councillor attend the event, including any relevant travel costs.
3. Whether the event will support a councillor in fulfilling their duties as a portfolio holder or member of a committee.
4. Whether the event will support a councillor in being able to carry out potential future duties as a portfolio holder or member of a committee meeting.
5. Whether the event will assist the Council in addressing an imminent and pressing need.
6. The amount which has been spent on supporting a particular councillor or group of councillors in the current and previous municipal year.
7. Whether a similar event could be delivered locally and benefit a greater number of councillors.

3.6 It is of course best practice that any relevant training attended by councillors should then be shared with any other member who may benefit from it as well, to ensure consistency and value for money.

4. **Organisational Impacts**

4.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although the fundamental purpose of establishing a protocol is based upon the need to ensure any expenditure is both within budget and effectively targeted.

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

5. **Recommendation**

5.1 That members consider the proposed protocol.