Cabinet

04 September 2013

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012 -15
OUT-TURN REPORT 2012-13**

Lead Member: Councillor Margaret Smith, Leader

Lead Officer: Steve Nugent, Head of Human Resources

1.   Background

The Council has for many years regarded Member Development as integral to ensuring Councillors are fully equipped and developed to effectively fulfil their role as a Councillor.

As part of this approach, a Member Development Plan was developed and approved by the Council in 2012. This included the Plan being considered by the Scrutiny Committee, on 9 May 2012.

The Plan sets out the Priority Objectives for the period 2012 – 15 and identifies Key Actions to be addressed on an annual basis. This report provides a narrative of the progress against the Key Actions in 2012-13 and proposes some amendments to the Plan for 2013-14.

The on-going progress of the Plan will be led by the Member Development Group [Councillors J Bell, J Hothersall, Head of HR and HR Adviser], with member development being part of the Leader of the Councils portfolio.

Details of progress in 2012-13 against the Key Actions is at Appendix A.

2.   Progress

A Key Target from the Plan for 2012-13 was to retain the North West Member Development Charter. This was successfully achieved in October 2012.

Within the report received on retaining the Charter, some of the feedback comments by the Assessors included;-

- *'Learning hours' seem to work really well, there are high levels of engagement in terms of feeding in topics and suggestions and seems to encourage learning for all members even if they are not sitting on Group/Committee i.e. planning for non-planning members, in addition they have raised the confidence and knowledge of members when dealing with community questions/queries as well as their role on other partnerships e.g. South Ribble Partnerships.*

- *Development is seen as non-partisan there was a feeling of supporting each other on learning and development across all parties in terms of informal conversations and shared learning events.*

- *The approach to PDPs is innovative and makes best use of resources. Incorporating PDPs into a 'Learning Hour' session ensured members were engaged, shared their thoughts and fed back to each other as well as building their own development plan. It will be interesting to see if this approach engages more members in the future.*

- *There is a clear process in place to ensure measurement of the actions within the Member Development Plan are scrutinised every June and taken to full Council for comment and noting.*

Regular Learning Hours have been held during the past twelve months with good attendance at the majority of the sessions. The Learning Hours have covered topics such as;-

- Safeguarding Awareness
- Housing
- Emergency Planning
- Community Safety

3.   Areas for further action

As part of the Charter report the Assessors identify certain areas for further improvement, with a few examples being;-

- *To increase the attendance of members at development events. Whilst it was felt that current attendance was reasonable, more work could be done to build on this and increase wider levels of engagement.*

- *To improve members' understanding and skills around technology and IT and how this can support community outcomes in an efficient and effective way – bringing members more up to speed, using technology more confidently and recognising the value of resources and how they can support their role and help their communities.*

- *Investment in supporting councillors getting to grips with their changing community role – different skills are required to make things happen and thought needs to be given in how to help councillors think through these changes and how that impacts on the skills and knowledge they have, what serve them well in the future and the areas that they, individually and collectively, need to develop.*

In addition further progress needs to be made in 2013-14, regarding Members awareness of proposed new technology applications that will be introduced. This will include providing Members with training and support.

Furthermore, awareness of the benefits of the new website and learning from the social media pilot project needs to be undertaken.

4.   Proposed amendments to the Key Actions for 2013-14

It is considered that the majority of the Key Actions should in effect remain unaltered for 2013-14, as they are in fact the key areas where meaningful development for Members can be undertaken, maximising the resources available. The Plan for 2013/14 is at Appendix B.

The amendments to the Plan for 2013/14 are;-

- Target 4 to increase from 80% to 90% of Members taking part in training and development activities,

- Key Action 1 has replaced the previous action [Deliver the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Community Leadership], which is now completed,

- Key Action 5 has been reworded to reflect the introduction of the new website and the social media pilot project.