

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Audit &amp; governance committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>26 January 2016</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Personal development plans for members</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Solicitor to the council, people and regulatory</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key decision**

This is not an executive decision.

## **Wards affected**

Countywide

## **Purpose**

To consider options for implementing a system of personal development for elected members

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

- (a) the committee note the resolution of Council on 22 May 2015 for the consideration of a system of annual performance appraisal for elected members;**
- (b) the options and implementation of a system of assessed personal development be referred to the member development and training working group for recommendation to the cabinet member economy and corporate services.**

## Alternative options

- 1 To not consider any scheme and not refer the item to the member development and training working group.

## Reasons for recommendations

- 2 To allow for the further consideration of the options available for implementing a system of assessment and personal development for elected members.

## Key considerations

- 3 Council agreed on 22 May 2015, following recommendation from the independent remuneration panel, for the assistant director governance to develop a report, following consultation with group leaders, on options for implementing a system of annual performance appraisal for elected members.
- 4 This report is to be considered by the audit & governance committee. It contains feedback from consultation with group leaders.
- 5 Member appraisals schemes are not widely applied in English councils and so there are few member-specific models on which to base a local scheme. Two are known to have progressed to full implementation (Essex County Council) and (Hertsmere Borough Council); these are still in early days and so have limited measurable outcomes.
- 6 Performance appraisals are most commonly applied to an organisation's employees in order to assess performance, establish objectives and to identify areas for development and support. An elected member is not an employee and therefore looking to an appraisal system for employees would not be entirely appropriate.
- 7 It could be argued that members are appraised by virtue of their being elected by their constituents every 4 years, although this does not account for their ongoing development as ward councillors once elected.
- 8 Any scheme would be likely to be voluntary with consideration given to a self-assessment mechanism, which could be seen by group leaders.
- 9 Rather than develop a scheme of appraisal it would be more appropriate to ask the member development and training group to consider how to assist in drawing up personal plans to assist with member development.

## Community impact

- 10 The council's code of corporate governance seeks to ensure the council meets high ethical standards in everything it does; complies with legal requirements; serve the people of Herefordshire well; and use public money economically efficiently and effectively, accounting fully for its actions. It is important to ensure that members are effectively supported to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their various duties and having a transparent process (whether informal or formal) by which the training and development needs of members can be established would assist in achieving that objective.

## Equality duty

11 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under legislation;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

12 In developing any scheme regard must be had to this duty.

## Financial implications

13 Financial implications relate to the additional pressure on existing resources whether in terms of external support to the process and members' time as participants.

## Legal implications

14 It is at the council's discretion whether to implement such a scheme.

## Risk management

15 The risks associated with adopting a scheme are:

- that it lacks robustness and credibility to be used consistently and with all members participating; and
- that there are few precedents on which to base a reliable scheme that is appropriate for members;

Mitigation could take the form of running a pilot of a scheme with a sample of members which would be reviewed prior to taking a decision on whether or not to formally adopt a scheme.

16 The risks associated with not adopting a scheme are:

- that members training and development needs may not be met;
- that members skills and experience may not be used to best effect and/or succession planning is limited; and
- that members' opportunities to provide feedback regarding their experiences and for voicing any issues related to their own support and development is not maximised.

## Consultees

Group leaders were consulted in the production of this report and their views are reflected in the content of the report.

## **Appendices**

### **Background papers**

None identified.

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