

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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DECISION OF:	Cabinet
DATE:	28 November 2012
SUBJECT:	Engaging and Developing Elected Members
REPORT FROM:	Councillor John Smith, Deputy Leader and Corporate Affairs Councillor Trevor Holt, Equality and Member Development
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ruth Fairhurst, Deputy Chief Executive
TYPE OF DECISION:	COUNCIL
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain
SUMMARY:	The report presents the Elected Member Engagement Strategy and the Elected Member Development Strategy for approval.
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	That members of the Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the Member Engagement Strategy Agree the Member Development Strategy Refer both strategies for consideration at Council
IMPLICATIONS:	
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes No
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	Executive Director of Resources to advise regarding risk management
Statement on Impact on Resources	The strategies will be delivered through existing resources.

Equality/Diversity implications:	No. The strategies are relevant to all Elected Members.
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	Yes Comments
Wards Affected:	All
Scrutiny Interest:	None

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Committee	Committee	Council	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Much research has been carried out in terms of employee engagement and there is a strong business case to support the belief that engaged employees have higher levels of performance and demonstrate more innovative behaviour than less engaged employees. Being engaged also has advantages for the individual in that they enjoy greater levels of wellbeing and are more likely to feel that their work is manageable and sustainable.
- 1.2 However, very little research has taken place in terms of Elected Member Engagement. Bury Council has therefore asked its Members about their own engagement through a variety of development opportunities, the most notable being through 'reflection feedback sessions' and discussions whilst drawing up personal development plans. The Council has also used the research carried out on employees and adapted it to fit Elected Members.
- 1.3 Member development opportunities are key to driving up levels of engagement amongst Councillors and therefore our Elected Member Development Strategy has to clearly feed into the Engagement Strategy.
- 1.4 This report briefly explains the two strategies and how they are intrinsically linked.

2.0 ISSUES

2.1 Elected Member Engagement Strategy (Appendix 1)

- 2.1.1 Elected Member Engagement is a key priority for the Council. The strategy states a commitment to openness and transparency in decision making and higher levels of engagement for Elected Members as well as employees, trade unions, customers and residents. It further states that the Council will continue to implement a range of strategies to positively impact on Elected Member engagement levels.
- 2.1.2 The Council defines Elected Member engagement as a positive attitude held by the Elected Member towards the Council and its values. It recognises that engaged Councillors are more likely to be community cohesion champions, communicate effectively with residents, engage with new technologies and have a long-term strategy for their Ward. On a personal level engaged members are more likely to have higher levels of health and wellbeing and feel that their role is more manageable.
- 2.1.3 Officers have a strong role in driving up levels of engagement amongst Councillors. However, members of the Cabinet need to acknowledge that officers alone cannot engage Elected Members. Party leaders and members of the Cabinet have a key role in engaging their groups and individual members have a role in supporting the leader and their fellow Councillors.
- 2.1.4 The six drivers of engagement used by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development for employees have been adapted to apply to Elected Members. Each driver has been explained in the strategy along with a description of how members and officers can plan to increase engagement in each of the areas.
- These areas are:-
- Meaningfulness of role
 - Voice
 - Leadership, commitment and vision
 - Supportive environment
 - Person role fit
 - Leadership style
- 2.1.5 The strategy further outlines how success can be measured in terms of Member engagement.

2.2 Elected Member Development Strategy (Appendix 2)

- 2.2.1 As previously stated the development of Elected Members is key to their engagement. The Elected Member Development Strategy therefore outlines the Council's commitment to supporting and engaging Councillors via a wide range of development opportunities.
- 2.2.2 The objectives in terms of Member development are outlined as follows:-
- To ensure that Member development activities are designed to meet the needs of the Council, individual Members and the borough;
 - To embed a culture of continuous development for Members that is championed by Members;

- To have 100% of Elected Members complete a personal development plan that provides meaningful goals that can be realised through the development offer;
- To obtain Level 1 Review and Level 2 of the Elected Member Charter with North West Employers Organisation.

2.2.3 The Council has an annual budget of £10,000 set aside for the development and training of Members. This includes £500.00 towards each party's group development days. The Elected Member Development Group meets six weekly to discuss member development. The leaders of each political group sit on the Member Development Group, demonstrating a firm commitment to the development of Members.

2.2.4 Currently 80% of Members have a personal development plan (PDP) and from the information gained through the plan a training needs analysis has been drawn up to inform future training and development events. As an example, it was evident from the PDP's that there were a large number of Councillors who were feeling under pressure in terms of work life balance and managing their time. A development day was therefore organised around the health and wellbeing of Elected Members. A nurse also attended the day to carry out basic health checks.

2.2.5 The strategy recognises that the Council's development offer is wide and varied in terms of timings (both day and evening sessions are offered as well as the occasional weekend). There are also a variety of methods of development interventions including:-

- Formal training days – face to face delivery
- e'learning
- Coaching
- Mentoring programme
- Access to the employee training and development programme
- External conferences and workshops
- Work shadowing – "In your Shoes"
- Lunchtime learning events
- Group away days

2.2.6 The success of the Member Development Strategy will be measured through a variety of evidence including evaluation sheets, feedback sessions and subsequent personal development plans. The strategy outlines the success indicators.

3.0 CONCLUSION

3.1 Through local research there is evidence of a strong business case for the Council to be committed to Elected Member Engagement.

3.2 Key to engagement is Elected Member development in its widest sense.

3.3 The Council is demonstrating its commitment by launching the Elected Member Engagement Strategy and the Elected Member Development Strategy.

List of Background Papers:-

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