

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2010**

**REPORT ON: CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

**REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**REPORT NO: 702-2010**

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide information on the recently launched Continuous Professional Development Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government and to recommend its adoption by the Council.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- i) the Council adopts the Continuous Professional Development Framework for Elected Members which was recently launched by the Improvement Service
- ii) individual members are encouraged to make use of the Framework, with support being provided by the Corporate Planning Department
- iii) members note that, although the Improvement Service has also launched a separate Caseload Management Portal, the Council is continuing to develop an in-house system which will assist members in the recording, monitoring and analysis of constituents' enquiries

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Adoption of the Continuous Professional Framework will require a one-off payment of £2,000, to match the investment made by the Councils which piloted the framework. This can be met from the Chief Executive's Revenue Budget.

## **4. MAIN TEXT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government was launched by the Improvement Service in September 2010, following a pilot project involving two-thirds of members in six Councils - East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire.

4.1.2 The CPD Framework provides members with professional and personal development opportunities and generates constructive feedback on how they exercise a wide range of political skills. The framework provides access to a range of development and learning materials, including online learning, and also offers the option of a confidential 360 degree feedback tool which allows members to gain an understanding of how their behaviours are perceived by others.

4.1.3 The CPD Framework is not compulsory. It is up to individual Councils whether they choose to adopt the Framework and, if the Council does sign up, it will be up to individual members to decide whether, and to what extent, they wish to participate. However, members will recall that the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee recommended that all councillors should be required to undertake

appropriate training to enable them to perform their duties effectively and that all councillors should participate in a training needs assessment and have a personal development plan in place. An interim process for agreeing such plans was adopted by the Council, until such time as the National Framework was available. The importance of training and development for members was also highlighted during the Best Value 2 Audit.

#### 4.2 The CPD Framework in more detail

4.2.1 The Framework is based on 14 political skills which are underpinned by 73 behaviours. It is flexible enough to accommodate the different levels of experience and seniority of members, and to allow for adaptation to the local circumstances that prevail within individual Councils. The Framework focuses on behaviours - the way in which elected members display and practice the skills that they have - as they can be learned or acquired, by virtue of increasing experience, gaining knowledge and participating in development opportunities.

4.2.2 The CPD Framework has been designed to give elected members feedback about their performance and to provide them with professional and personal development opportunities that will enable them to further enhance their effectiveness. The Framework will:

- deliver enhanced, more focused and more structured support arrangements for elected members as they lead local government through a period of considerable change
- help develop elected members in their existing roles, prepare them for greater responsibilities, help them become more creative in tackling new challenges and provide them with transferable skills
- help elected members fulfil their governance roles more effectively, thereby improving local governance and accountability of public services to local communities
- complement existing development and support frameworks already in place in Councils
- provide elected members with access to the Online Development Programme 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with learning resources being available to them as and when they need support to deal with an issue or challenge

4.2.3 The CPD Framework involves each member completing an online skills development profile. This can be done either on a self-assessment basis or on a 360 degree basis, which sees the individual being assessed by people with whom they have regular dealings in their role. Participation in 360 degree feedback is entirely voluntary. The elected member will receive a Development Profile report, outlining their perceived strengths and development areas. They will then participate in a Personal Development Planning meeting which will be facilitated by a Council Officer, to discuss their report, to identify their development needs and to agree a Personal Development Plan.

4.2.4 The elected member will then be able to access a range of learning opportunities through the CPD Framework Development Programme, including notebooks, e-learning, case studies, online resources, briefing notes and masterclasses.

4.2.5 Between six and twelve months after the Personal Development Plan has been agreed, the elected member will participate in a review meeting with the Council Officer to

discuss how they are progressing with the implementation of their Personal Development Plan and any additional support they require. Between twelve and eighteen months after the elected member has completed their Development Profile, they will be invited to complete it again, either on a self-assessment or 360 degree basis. This will enable the member to track their progress and any improvements in their skills and behaviours.

#### 4.3 What are the benefits to Elected Members of taking part in the CPD Framework?

4.3.1 The benefits of participating in the CPD Framework are likely to vary from member to member, depending on their experience, seniority and role. The CPD Framework may:

- improve an elected member's understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and development needs
- provide them with a better understanding of their role and responsibilities
- develop them in their existing role
- prepare them for greater responsibilities
- provide them with transferable skills which can be utilised in other roles in the event that they choose not to stand for re-election or lose their seat
- enable them to set priorities for the year ahead
- identify areas where problems may be occurring and identify strategies to resolve these
- identify areas where they feel they have skills which are not being utilised to their full extent, and identify how these can be better exploited
- provide them with professional and personal development opportunities that will enable them to further enhance their effectiveness as an elected member
- enable them to take responsibility for their own development
- enable them to track improvements that they make and identify new priorities for development on a twelve to eighteen month period

#### 4.4 Costs

4.4.1 Each of the six pilot Councils invested £2,000 to support the development of the Framework, so new Councils signing up are also being asked to make a one-off financial contribution of £2,000 to reflect the resources invested by the pilot Councils. This will provide a small fund for the ongoing development of the learning resources to ensure that they continue to respond to and reflect the challenges facing elected members. The Improvement Service will also contribute to this development fund by match-funding each £2,000 contributed by Councils.

4.4.2 The Improvement Service will establish and facilitate a Steering Group of participating Councils to work with SOLACE and other relevant bodies to identify and agree the additional learning resources that are to be developed.

4.4.3 The CPD Framework is being delivered through the Brightwave platform. Councils who already use the Brightwave platform will receive access to the National Elected Member

Portal at no cost. The Chief Officers' Management Team recently approved a report by the Head of Personnel recommending the purchase of the Brightwave platform to improve delivery and reduce unit costs of employee training and development. The initial cost of this system will be shared by all departments from existing training budgets. There will, therefore, be no additional cost of using the Brightwave platform for the elected members' CPD Framework.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

- 4.5.1 Adoption of the CPD Framework would be a cost-effective way of meeting the requirement that members participate in training needs assessment and have a personal development plan in place. It is therefore recommended that the Council adopt the Framework and encourage individual members to make use of it.
- 4.5.2 If agreed, the Assistant Chief Executive will make arrangements for the Council to sign up to the Framework and the Corporate Planning Department will provide support to members in Personal Development Planning.

#### 4.6 Members' Caseload Management Portal

- 4.6.1 At the same time as launching the CPD Framework, the Improvement Service has also been working with pilot Councils and a private company called Lagan to develop a Members' Caseload Management Portal to help them manage their constituents' enquiries.
- 4.6.2 The Council's IT Department has been working to develop a similar system, which includes the good practice features from a number of such systems being developed commercially but also allows connectivity with in-house systems. It is recommended that the Council continue to develop its own solution rather than use the Lagan product.

### 5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

### 6. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance, Head of Personnel and Head of IT have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

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