

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:-</b>	<b>Members' Training &amp; Development Panel</b>
2.	<b>Date:-</b>	<b>Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012</b>
3.	<b>Title:-</b>	<b>Political Skills Framework</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:-</b>	<b>Resources</b>

### **5. Summary**

Local Government Association has just published a new Political Skills Framework to support Member development. This report proposes a way forward to implement a framework tailored for the Council.

### **6. Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- **Agree the establishment of a working group and pilot of an Elected Member Skills Framework for Rotherham.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **7.1 Political Skills Framework**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has just published a new Political Skills Framework (May 2012), which is attached at Appendix 1. The purpose of the framework is to highlight the core knowledge and skills required of Councillors in the current climate, so that development opportunities can be offered in these key areas.

The Members learning and development site on the intranet is currently being updated and it is intended to use the themes in the Political Skills Framework to group any learning & development opportunities.

Members can also use the framework individually to self-assess their skills (as part of the PDP process) to highlight where they might seek further development.

The framework has been updated for 2012 to reflect the new demands on Members from the Localism agenda, the economic climate and changes in technology and social media. There are six core skill areas:

- Local Leadership – engaging with communities to facilitate a vision for the locality
- Partnership working – building relationships with colleagues, officers, community groups and organisations
- Communication – listening, appropriate language, dealing with the media
- Political understanding – promoting a political vision, encouraging public engagement, working across political boundaries with political integrity
- Scrutiny & Challenge – critical friend, constructive challenge & feedback, analysis of information and presentation of clear arguments
- Regulating and monitoring – legal responsibilities and protocols

In 2011 skills profiles were introduced in the Council for all officers, to be used in Performance & Development Reviews in a similar way. These have been tailored to the different levels of officers throughout the organisation and reflect the requirements of officers in the pay and grading scheme. An example of an officer skills profile is attached at Appendix 2.

### **7.2 Pilot of framework**

In order to encourage Members to consider their own development needs, it is suggested that the framework be adapted to be used in support of the PDP process and to categorise Member training.

The framework could be shortened and tailored to reflect Rotherham's needs. To do this, Panel may wish to consider a working group to review the

framework with officers. The working group could include a Member elected in 2011, Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair.

Following this review and design of Rotherham's political skills framework, the model could be piloted with those new Members elected in 2012. The aim would be to pilot the framework in September/October, when new Members have had time to adjust to their new roles and be in a position to self-assess.

An evaluation of the pilot would then be reported back to panel in autumn, to support the content of the autumn programme and for use in next year's PDPs.

## **8. Finance**

Development of the political skills framework would be undertaken in-house, so incurs no additional costs, other than officer and Member time.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Members will need to feel that the framework is appropriate and relevant. The review of the framework by a working group seeks to ensure the content is considered appropriate in the local context. Any framework needs to be short and concise. The working group will look to shorten and simplify the framework to make it easy and quick to use.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Development of Members enables them to carry out their respective roles and help keep Members updated on national and local policy issues. Having a skills framework to highlight knowledge and skills provides focus to development.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Appendix 1 – National Political Skills Framework

Appendix 2 – Example Officer Skills Profile

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