



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 14th March, 2008
Subject:	Members' Development Framework - Personal Development Plans
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Principal Committee Administrator (extension 6314)
Contact Officer:	Julie Lilley, Members' Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Relevant Background Information

In May, 2007 a Member Development Working Group was established made up of officers from the Members' Support Unit, Core Improvement Team and Human Resources Section together with a representative from each of the Party Groups. The Working Group designed a Member Development Framework, an integral element of which was Personal Development Plans for Members. Discussions were undertaken with the IDeA who submitted a proposal for undertaking PDPs for Members based on the 'Political Skills Framework' widely used in Local Authorities in other parts of the UK. The Political Skills Framework details the following competencies indicating the positive and negative aspects of each:

- community leadership
- regulating and monitoring
- scrutiny and challenge
- communication skills
- working in partnership
- political understanding.

The IDeA proposal was considered and accepted by the Working Group and the Member Development Framework was formally launched by the Lord Mayor at Clarendon Buildings on 23rd November.

Current Position

Marcus Coulson and Jon Huish of the IDeA undertook Personal Development Plan interviews with Members on 10th and 11th December and 10th and 24th January. Eighteen Members in total have been interviewed with each interview lasting approximately one hour. In preparation for the interview Members were asked to complete a Self Assessment Skills Questionnaire which was used to inform the discussion.

A further date of 14th March has been arranged when an additional four Members will undertake a Personal Development Plan Interview.

Informal feedback from those Members who have gone through the process would suggest that they have found it useful and worthwhile. However, the value will of course be tangible when Members actually begin to access developmental opportunities.

Next Steps

Following on from the completion of all the scheduled PDP interviews the IDeA will produce an individual Training Plan for each Member who has undergone the process as well as a comprehensive, overarching Training Analysis.

The Training Analysis will, among other things, identify areas of generic training which have emerged as the result of discussion with Members. The Members' Support Unit will address these cross-cutting training needs and develop a Training Plan for the next twelve months. The Training Plan will consist of modules of training which, depending on the subject, may be facilitated either in-house or by an external provider. The developmental modules which will make up the Training Plan will be offered to all Members. Members will be able to access this training without having to expend any of their personal development budgets.

Over the next four to eight weeks those Members who have had a Personal Development Plan drawn up will be invited to have an informal interview with an officer from the Members' Support Unit to agree the specific training needs emerging from their PDP and, in particular, how best to meet those training needs. It is not intended that development activity will in anyway be prescriptive and individual Members circumstances and preferred methods for addressing development needs will be the primary consideration.

When an individual Member's development activities have been agreed the Members' Support Unit will take responsibility for co-ordinating all the necessary arrangements to allow the Member to undertake the activity. The costs of undertaking the activity will be met from the Member's individual training budget.

To enable the usefulness and effectiveness of development activities to be judged Members who have undertaken development opportunities will be asked to complete an evaluation form. This will allow the Members' Support Unit to build a portfolio of activities from which Members will be able to choose in accordance with their individual priorities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

The Committee is requested to note the progress made to date in respect of Personal Development Plans for Members.

Those Members who have not as yet engaged in the process are encouraged to do so as soon as possible in order that they will be able to access a full range of training opportunities in the next financial year.

Resource Implications

The Members' Training Budget for 2007/ 2008 is £70,000.

Key to Abbreviations

PdP Personal Development Plan
IDeA Improvement and Development Agency

Documents Attached

N/A

