

## EERA Charter For Elected Member Development SELF ASSESSMENT

This template aims to help councils that sign up to aspire to the principles of the EERA Charter for Elected Member Development. It provides a guide for self assessment and for drawing up the action plan that must accompany the statement of commitment. Councils wanting to use their own self assessment format should do so.

Whichever style of action plan is produced it should identify:

- future planned action
- when action is expected to be completed
- who is responsible for the action
- who has overall responsibility for monitoring implementation of the action plan

In terms of pulling the action plan together, Councils may find it useful to have a team of people, such as the all party member development group with officer support.

Those responsible for drawing up the action plan should look at each point on the 'Guidelines' and 'What this means in practice' and ask

1. 'What evidence do we have that suggests we are following good practice?'
2. What action do we need to take, if any, to follow good practice or continuously improve? (Taking account of any resource implications and constraints)
3. When will this action be taken by?
4. Who will be responsible for the action?

A named person should be identified as being responsible for monitoring the action plan.

The 'Examples of Evidence' given in the Good Practice Guidance may help in identifying action to take, however the examples are not a requirement and councils must decide on action that best fits their particular circumstances.



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### Commitment to member development

GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
1.1 Top political and managerial leadership commitment to development of elected members	The political and managerial leadership can describe strategies put into place to develop elected members in order to improve the council's performance	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Council's 'Key Policies and Actions 2009/10' report identifies the Member Training and Development programme and working towards obtaining Charter accreditation as two of the key projects for the year (Council 26/2/09, Minute 50).</i></p> <p><i>The Council's Corporate Plan and the Information and Customer Services Divisional Plan both contain items relating to Member learning and development. Established an all-party Charter Implementation Group (CIG) to lead on the process of applying for the Charter. Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklets.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Member Development Policy to be drafted for submission to CIG.</i></p>	<b>Jul 2009</b>	<b>HICS</b>

#### Key of Abbreviations

CIG	Charter Implementation Group
HICS	Head of Information and Customer Services
CSM	Committee Services Manager
CA	Committee Administrator



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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
1.2 Policy statement	The council has a written statement, issued to all members, specifying its policy on member development in terms of equality of opportunity, priority development areas and named member and officers responsible	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b></i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Member Development Policy needs to be prepared.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Place agreed Policy in Members' lounge/office/library and include reference to this in the Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklets to ensure that the Policy is easily accessible to Members.</i></p>	<p><b>Jul 2009</b></p> <p><b>Aug 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>1.3 Equality of opportunity and access to learning and development</p>	<p>The political and managerial leadership can describe specific actions that they take to ensure equality of opportunity, and access to learning, in the development of elected members.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Courses run in the afternoon and repeated in the evening in response to request by Members. Venues for training in Rayleigh and Rochford to assist access. Course handouts provided to those Members unable to attend training. Specialist training for Review Committee Members has included role-playing and interactive sessions. 'Moots' or mock hearings have been organised for Licensing Committee and Standards Committee Members.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> (1) Re-launch 'Modern Councillor' e-learning facility.  (2) The integration of training materials available on CD, e.g. Calderdale Chairmanship training and Scrutiny training, into the training programme.</i></p>	<p><b>July 2009</b></p> <p><b>July 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
1.4 Budget	The Council has allocated a budget for Member development which is adequate to address priority and other development needs.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Budget of £20,000 allocated specifically for Member training (as part of the core Budget set at full Council on 27/1/09).</i></p> <p><i>The budget is monitored on a weekly basis. All budget demands for Member training have to be agreed by Head of Information and Customer Services (HICS).</i></p> <p><i>Additional funding from Improvement East for peer mentoring of Leader, Deputy Leader and two Executive Members.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> None required.</i></p>		

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
1.5 Officer resource support	An officer of the council has responsibility, which is time resourced and in their job description, for co-ordinating member development	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Head of Information and Customer Services (HICS) and Committee Administrator (CA) shown as contacts in Member learning and development booklets.</i></p> <p><i>Job descriptions of HICS, Committee Services Manager (CSM) and CA contain responsibility for taking forward Member learning and development.</i></p> <p><i>CSM shown on Divisional Plan as lead officer responsible for Member development.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> None required.</i></p>		

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
1.6 Dissemination of learning	The political and managerial leadership can provide examples of learning among elected members, and of promoting exchange of information, as part of encouraging a learning organisation culture.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Peer mentoring facilitated by Improvement East and provided by IDeA for Leader, Deputy Leader and two Executive Members.</i></p> <p><i>Reports from outside body meetings.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant learning and development courses offered to the District's Parish/Town Councils.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> CIG to consider possibilities, for instance, encouraging Councillors attending visits, such as Southampton Airport/recycling plants, to disseminate their learning via, say, written briefings in the Members' Bulletin.</i></p>	Dec 2009	CIG

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### 2. Strategic approach to member development

GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.1 Member led strategy	Representative members are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of member development strategies, possibly through an established all party task group or other all party committee	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> CIG established as a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee comprising Leaders of both political groups, other elected Members and Independent Members of the Standards Committee (Standards Committee 2/10/08 Minute 280).</i></p> <p><i>Phase 1 of the 2009/10 learning and development programme agreed by CIG; phases 2 and 3 (to be held in Oct/Nov and Feb/Mar) to be developed in consultation with the CIG (Standards Committee 2/4/09, Minute 82).</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Ensure that the Member Development Policy provides for Member involvement in monitoring and evaluation of training, including an evaluation at the end of each phase for feeding into the CIG for review.</i></p>	<b>Jul 2009</b>	<b>HICS</b>



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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.2 Linkage to council corporate plan	Political and managerial leadership are actively involved in identifying priority organisational development needs which link council's aims and objectives to the development of elected members.	<p><i>Council's Senior Management Team provide input regarding the courses they wish to offer to Members to ensure that learning and development meets corporate objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Introduction of mandatory training for Development Control, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members to strengthen knowledge of relevant law and procedures.</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>The Member Development Policy should identify priority development needs, making strong and clear links with Council's aims and objectives (see report to Standards Committee 2/4/09 "the programme needs to be responsive to the corporate priorities of the Council, as well as the individual training needs of Members").</i></p>	<b>Jul 2009</b>	<b>HICS</b>



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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.3 Member roles clearly set out	The various representative roles of elected members are clearly specified and members are able to describe how they contribute to achieving the council's objectives.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Some Member role descriptions developed in 2006. The Council's Constitution contains Portfolio Holder responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Review of Member role descriptions.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Training booklet to detail which particular Members each course is primarily aimed at (Standards Committee Minutes 2/4/09).</i></p>	<p><b>Sep 2009</b></p> <p><b>May 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>2.4 Process for identification of needs at individual and Council wide level</p>	<p>The council has a structured process for regularly assessing elected member development needs at the individual and council wide levels.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.5;">Draft</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> Self-assessment questionnaires issued annually to each Member – 85% return rate for 2008/09. Training Programme agreed by CIG and Standards Committee, with formal half-yearly review. The training identified as mandatory (Development Control Licensing/ Appeals), or necessary for the fulfilment of the Authority’s stated corporate objectives, or induction (when appropriate) is held in May to July. End of event questionnaires issued and results noted and acted upon if necessary. Self-assessment questionnaires asked Members to detail specific individual training requirements. These individual needs will be developed in consultation with the Charter Implementation Group. Tailored training is provided for Review and Audit Committee Members.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Through CIG look at individual Member training requests (detailed in self-assessment questionnaires) as part of the development of the October-November 2009 and February-March 2010 elements of the Programme.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sep 2009</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CIG</b></p>




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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>2.5 Structured and timely approach to promoting development opportunities</p>	<p><i>Members confirm that they receive appropriate and adequate notice of development opportunities to allow them to plan in advance</i></p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Timetable of dates for learning opportunities produced and agreed in April for full municipal year. Indication of training session details provided to Standards Committee in April. Training split into 3 phases. Full course details for each phase of training contained in a booklet and sent to all Members at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of first course. Members' Bulletin sent weekly with reminder of training courses for forthcoming week. Return booking form for training courses in each booklet, and returns monitored. Letter reminder to those who have not returned the booking form.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Phone calls to those Members who have not returned booking form and a further copy of the form sent or emailed if necessary.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Put notices in Members lounge/office/library of forthcoming training.</i></p> <p><i>(3) Members/CIG to act as champions for promoting training opportunities.</i></p>	<p><b>May 2009</b></p> <p><b>May 2009</b></p> <p><b>Sep 2009</b></p>	<p><b>CA</b></p> <p><b>CA</b></p> <p><b>CIG</b></p>



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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>2.6 Appropriately learn with external partners</p>	<p>Political and managerial leadership can provide examples of action taken to encourage joint development opportunities for elected members and external partner organisations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.5;">Draft</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> <i>Joint training opportunities with Basildon and Castle Point Councils have been undertaken in previous years. We continue to offer relevant courses to them.</i>  <i>Relevant courses offered to Parish/Town Councils.</i>  <i>Programmes in previous years using external (partner) support for developing Members included courses offered by Essex County Highways, Crown Prosecution Service, Environment Agency.</i></p> <p><i>It is accepted that it will sometimes be advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions (report to Standards Committee 2/4/09).</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>CIG to consider other opportunities.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sep 2009</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CIG</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>CFMD Charter for Member Development</p> </div>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.7 Strategy for Induction	Elected members who are new to the council, and those new to a particular role, confirm that they received a structured and effective induction.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Induction strategy – new Members invited to meet Chief Executive and Corporate Directors. They each receive an induction pack, which includes training details, Member information guide, Council procedures and code of conduct.</i></p> <p><i>Induction Programme for training (May-July) contains mandatory and corporate priority related training.</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Each new Councillor provided with a Councillor Mentor – (CIG to confirm).</p>	<b>May 2009</b>	<b>CIG</b>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.8 Addresses political leadership and team development	Top political leadership are actively involved in defining the council's approach both to effective political leadership (for current and prospective leaders) and to team development	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Leader and former Deputy Leader attended the IDeA Leadership Academy.</i></p> <p><i>Joint SMT/Executive awaydays on key corporate priorities, e.g. Recycling/Budget.</i></p> <p><i>Peer mentoring by the IDeA for new Executive Members and the Leader and Deputy Leader.</i></p> <p><i>From 2009/10 Area Committee Chairmen meet with the Lead Officers to plan a consistent approach to these public meetings.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> CIG to develop.</i></p>	<b>Oct 2009</b>	<b>CIG</b>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
2.9 Mechanisms for evaluation, and informing future plans, identified.	The council has systems in place that effectively evaluate the benefits from elected member development and identify areas for improvement.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> End of event questionnaires summarised and comments actioned as appropriate. Six-monthly report to Standards Committee on progress of training to date.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Detailed approach to evaluation of training to be included in Member Development Policy.</i></p>	<b>July 2009</b>	<b>HICS</b>

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### 3. Member learning and development plan in place

GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
3.1 Addresses development priorities	The council draws up plans to meet training and development needs identified as a priority in helping it to achieve corporate aims and objectives.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Report to Standards Committee on 2/4/09 that the learning and development programme needs to be responsive to corporate priority needs of the Council.</i></p> <p><i>Mandatory training introduced for 2009/10 for Development Control, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members.</i></p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p><i>(1) Member Development Policy needs to set this out clearly.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet needs to state that the programme has been formulated to help the Council meet its corporate aims and objectives and show linkages between courses and corporate objectives.</i></p>	<p><b>July 2009</b></p> <p><b>May 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
3.2 Identify what development activities should achieve	The council can demonstrate that elected member training and development activities have well defined and focused objectives.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Specific training for Review Committee Members and Audit Committee Members for 2009/10. Commitment to look into tailoring training on a more individual basis.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Need to add stated purpose and objectives of courses in the training booklet.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Need to include more specific detail in course outlines in respect of who courses are aimed at primarily (Standards Committee Minutes 2/4/09).</i></p>	<p><b>May 2009</b></p> <p><b>May 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>3.3 Sets out how, when, where and who is responsible</p>	<p>The elected member training and development plan follows a developed planning process including who is responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the plan.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Standards Committee terms of reference state that the Standards Committee shall determine the annual Member Training Programme (Paragraph 9.13 of Article 9 of the Council's Constitution). The proposed Member learning and development plan is contained within the report to Standards Committee in April each year. Job descriptions of HICS, CSM and CA contain responsibility for taking forward Member learning and development. Officer Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) identify targets relating to Member development flowing from the Council's Corporate Plan and Information and Customer Services Divisional Plan.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> None required.</i></p>		

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>3.4 Takes account of access to development opportunities</p>	<p>The council organises events at various times, to allow for access by those with work or family commitments, and utilises a range of methods to meet learning needs.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Programme shows that development opportunities are available in the afternoon and repeated in the evening to allow access by different groups, including those who work. Childcare allowance available for babysitting dependant children. Carer's allowance is also available. On-line training available via the 'Modern Councillor'. Handouts provided to Members unable to meet a training session. Buffet provided prior to each training session. Variety of learning styles employed by trainers, according to subject matter.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Integrate use of Calderdale CDs in Chairmanship and Success with Scrutiny into the training programme.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Consider learning methods as part of the development of phases 2 and 3 of the training programme.</i></p>	<p><b>Sept 2009</b></p> <p><b>Sept 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>HICS</b></p>



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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
<p>3.5 Linkage between Individual plans and the council's corporate and other plans</p>	<p>Individual elected members can describe their learning needs and how these link into function and corporate aims and objectives.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Committee-specific training sessions for: Audit/Review/Development Control/Licensing/Appeals Committee Members that link learning to Members' role on that Committee.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b></i></p> <p><i>(1) Links between the Council's aims and objectives and specific development courses to be shown in the Learning and Development booklet.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Training needs analysis questionnaires pinpointing specific requests from individual Members to be reviewed by Charter Implementation Group as part of the development of phases 2 and 3 of the Programme.</i></p>	<p><b>May 2009</b></p> <p><b>Sept 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p> <p><b>CIG</b></p>

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GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
3.6 Representative elected members consulted	The council has an open and constructive relationship on elected member development with representatives from the various political / non-political groups	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; opacity: 0.5;">Draft</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> CIG established with a membership as follows: Leader, Opposition Leader, District Council Members and Independent Members of the Standards Committee. Members' Bulletin sent weekly to all Members, containing details of all the learning and development courses for the forthcoming week. Standards Committee oversees Member Development process.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> None required.</p>		

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### 4. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
4.1 Members learn and develop effectively	The top political and managerial leadership can consistently give tangible examples of how development of elected members has improved the performance of the council, functions and individuals.	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> End of event questionnaires and yearly review of training opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Mandatory Development Control/ Licensing/Appeals training introduced to increase Members' knowledge and improve performance.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Evaluation process, linked to course objectives, to be introduced at the end of each of the 3 phases of Member Development.</i></p>	<b>Jul 2009</b>	<b>HICS</b>

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<p>4.2 Learning is shared with other elected members and where appropriate with officers and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Elected members can give examples of how they have been encouraged to learn, and to share the learning with others, so as to improve their own performance and that of others.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Reports from Members' visits to Outside Bodies. Handouts provided to those Members unable to attend training session.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> (1) Establish a file of training material to be placed in the Members' library/office. (2) CIG to consider possibilities, for instance, encouraging Councillors attending visits, such as Southampton Airport/recycling plants, to disseminate their learning via, say, written briefings in the Members' Bulletin.</i></p>	<p><b>Sept 2009</b></p> <p><b>Dec 2009</b></p>	<p><b>CA</b></p> <p><b>CIG</b></p>
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<p>4.3 Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact</p>	<p>The council can demonstrate that it periodically evaluates the cost and benefits of member training and development and the impact it has had on performance</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> End of year review to Standards Committee.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Evaluation strategy to be included in the Member Development Policy.</i></p>	<p><b>Jul 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p>
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<p>4.4 Identifies (and implements) improvements to learning and development activities</p>	<p>People confirm that the council is genuinely committed to the continuous development of elected members and can give examples of relevant and timely improvements that have been made to development activities.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Minutes of Standards Committee meetings showing implementation of mandatory Development Control, Licensing and Appeals training for Committee Members. Review Committee Minutes showing review of Area Committees, which resulted in Chairmanship training being organised to take place in first phase of training 2009/10. More specific targeting of training to relate to specific Councillor roles, including training sessions specifically aimed at Audit Committee Members and Review Committee Members.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> CIG to look at individual training requests (detailed in self-assessment questionnaires) as part of the development of the October-November 2009 and February-March 2010 elements of the Programme.</i></p>	<p><b>Sep 2009</b></p>	<p><b>CIG</b></p>

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### 5. Elected Member Development promotes work life balance and citizenship

GUIDELINES	WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN	BY WHO
5.1 Assists those with family responsibilities.	The council regularly assesses how it can assist those with family responsibilities in terms of suitable allowances and support	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Constitution showing childcare/carer allowances. Independent Remuneration Panel meetings assess the support needed for Members on an annual basis.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> None required.</i></p>		

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<p>5.2 Reviews how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making mechanisms</p>	<p>The council regularly reviews how it conducts its business, in terms of when meetings are held and access based on a clear understanding of diversity, so that elected members or potential members, are able to take part in the democratic process.</p>	<p><i><b>Evidence:</b> Timetable report shows that meetings are not scheduled for Monday evenings as this is when most Town/Parish Councils hold meetings. Timetable allows flexibility for scheduling additional meetings rather than having them scheduled. Council meetings generally held in the evening. Area Committees Agendas available in large print, and in alternative languages/formats on request. Area Committees are held out in the community.</i></p> <p><i><b>Action:</b> Recommendation from Review Committee that additional microphones and a hearing loop system be investigated for future Area Committees.</i></p>	<p><b>Jun 2009</b></p>	<p><b>HICS</b></p>
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5.3	Holds events for the community to encourage people to become community leaders.	The council actively encourages citizenship, and publicises the role of elected members as community leaders, as part of promoting local democracy and encouraging under represented groups to take up office.	<p><b>Evidence:</b> <i>Area Committees provide an opportunity for Councillors to exercise their community leadership role. Information about Councillors on the website.</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>Suggestions by CIG.</i></p>	<b>Sep 2009</b>	<b>CIG</b>
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