

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Innovation and Learning Fund – Post Election Member Training DVD 25th June 2009

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of a member development proposal put forward by Councillor Dennison which has been successful in gaining North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) Innovation Fund money.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee support the proposal put forward by Councillor Dennison and take advantage of the NWIEP grant funding to produce a member development training DVD for use during future induction programmes.**
- (2) That subject to (1) above, Members consider the content of the proposed DVD and agree a work programme for its development and production.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The North West Innovation Fund for Elected Members (funded by NWIEP as part of the Member Gateway) is open to individual Elected Members from any North West local authority.
- 1.2 Applications were invited from individual Members for proposals to support a range of activities to improve services and knowledge through shared learning. Although the guidelines on the criteria were flexible and not intended to be prescriptive it is expected that successful applicants will not only enhance their own learning but will need to demonstrate how this learning will be transferred within their council, locally and within the whole region, the emphasis being on shared learning.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Councillor Dennison submitted the attached application which has been successful in gaining the maximum £5,000 funding.
- 2.2 Whilst the application has been submitted by Councillor Dennison and it is his proposal, an individual Councillor (other than a Cabinet Member) has no delegated authority in this Council to take decisions on matters of expenditure or requiring officer actions. For this reason the Head of Democratic Services has been designated as the Responsible Spending Officer and the Council Business Committee will take any decisions required on how the project progresses.

- 2.3 The involvement of the Council Business Committee will have the added advantage of involving a number of members in the learning activity involved in putting the project together.
- 2.4 Members should note that whilst reference is made in the application form to a particular supplier, normal procurement rules will need to be followed once a decision has been made on the most useful content of the proposed DVD and quotes will be obtained from a range of suppliers if available.
- 2.5 Officer support will also be necessary in terms of checking the accuracy of the content of any DVD and the difficulty of providing this in order to meet the original deadline of 30th September 2009 has been raised with NWE0. The deadline has therefore been extended to 31st March 2010 to assist with this and officers of Democratic Services will support this work.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 It is suggested that all Members be consulted for ideas on the content of the proposed DVD.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 Option 1 – to take on the proposal put forward by Councillor Dennison and produce a training DVD suitable for newly elected Members which explains the systems and procedures of Local Authorities and the role of elected members at a maximum cost of £5000.
- 4.2 Option 2 – to take no action regarding the proposal put forward by Councillor Dennison and reject the £5000 grant from NWE0.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The intention of the Innovation Project is to promote learning amongst Councillors. The proposal put forward by Councillor Dennison is to produce a learning tool for Councillors in the future. However the success of the proposal in obtaining grant funding has been in part due to the suggested involvement of the Council Business Committee in developing the DVD as this will also provide an element of learning for the Members of the Committee with Councillor Dennison during the process of putting the DVD together, i.e. whatever the success of the resultant DVD, Councillors will have learnt valuable lessons in deciding how to proceed.
- 5.2 Should Members agree to option 1 above there are a number of issues to consider at this early stage so that work can commence:
- Decision on what form the DVD should take - some talking heads/graphics or other ideas?
 - How long should it last – 10 to 15 minutes?
 - Decision on how wide to make it or whether the focus should be on Lancaster. Advice is that this would still meet the criteria for funding – if it works for Lancaster it will show other Authorities in the North West what they can do even if the DVD made is not relevant in other Councils
 - How to decide what should be included on the DVD – what would be helpful to new Members? Consider obtaining views from existing Members, by asking questions for example -
 - get Members to think about what help or support they would have liked

- what for them were the best bits of induction, what did they learn, what did they want, what didn't they get?
- Alternatively the DVD could look at what Councillors do and/or what is expected of them, what it is like to be a Councillor – which could be put on a call centre DVD or used at an information session looking for candidates prior to elections.

5.3 It is important at this stage if the project is to be successful that as many Members as possible are consulted and this Committee takes ownership of the project to that they learn about the process of member development. Councillor Dennison and representatives of the Committee are likely to be asked to disseminate their experience in producing the DVD to other Members in the North West via a presentation, explaining any pitfalls as well as celebrating its success.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Impacts will be assessed as part of the development of the proposed DVD

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The grant offer is for a maximum of £5000 which will be paid on completion of the project. The Head of Democratic Services has been designated the responsible spending officer in relation to any expenditure in advance of receipt of the grant funding. All spending will be complete within the current financial year.

There are some resource implications in respect of officer time to support the project in Democratic Services and for this reason an extension to the deadline has been sought and agreed to enable the work to be delayed until after the June elections when sufficient capacity will be available.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The grant offer is subject to a number of standard conditions regarding the use of the grant monies and the deadline of 31st March 2010.

The production of the DVD will be subject to the Council's normal procurement rules and the question of future copyright of the finished product will need to be considered as part of the process.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS Notification of grant funding including Standard Conditions to Grant Offer – received 11th February, signed 25th March 2009</p>	<p>Contact Officer: Gillian Noall Telephone: 01524 582060 E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk Ref:</p>
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