

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 26 OCTOBER 2007

#### TRAINING FOR GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY ELECTED MEMBERS

##### Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline proposed training for Elected Members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Governance and Scrutiny Committee will play a central part in the work of the Council in holding the Cabinet to account; scrutinising decisions and conducting reviews; monitoring performance along with external scrutiny.
- 2.2 It has been recognised that there is a need to develop Elected Members role in the work of the Committee and to provide appropriate support and accordingly officers have been researching options for appropriate training.

#### 3. PROPOSED ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING

- 3.1 It is proposed that training be carried out in two stages. The first stage considered as foundation training will focus on providing an overview of the key areas of Governance and Scrutiny and the second stage focusing on the practicalities and techniques will entail in-house training on the process and procedures adopted within East Ayrshire Council.
- 3.2 In terms of the Stage 1 training, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) can assist with supporting the training by providing courses on three key areas detailed below.
- 3.3 CIPFA is able to provide an onsite training package of three interlinked courses as follows:-

**Day 1 - Governance and Scrutiny** - designed to help Members understand what is meant by good governance; outlines Members responsibilities for the achievement of good governance; and the role that Members play in their scrutiny role as both holding Officials to account and acting as a critical friend;

**Day 2 - Introduction to Local Government Finance** - to explain the financial cycle of activities of budgeting, budgetary control and reporting which will describe each of the stages and explain how Members should hold Officials to account within each stage; and

**Day 3 - Audit Committee training** - to explain the unique role of an Audit Committee and the requirements of Members in assessing the effectiveness of the control environment and the independent and challenging thinking required of an Audit Committee Member.

- 3.4** It is proposed that the Stage 1 training be carried out in December 2007.
- 3.5** Stage 2 of the training will be provided in-house and will give practical training on the scrutiny process adopted within the Council and will cover such elements as the role of Elected Members in the review process and questioning techniques. It is proposed that this training be combined with the workshop to be held in January when Committee Members are considering their work programme for the forthcoming year. Discussions are ongoing with the Training Unit in respect of this second element of training.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** The three day training course provided by CIPFA can be purchased for £4,500 (trainer expenses are additional and costs may be incurred for any requested tailoring). The training courses provide for up to 25 delegates and costs can be met from the Training Budget within Democratic Services.

#### **5. POLICY/LEGAL/COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** None arising directly from this report.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1** The Committee is asked to:-

- (i) approve the proposed training for Elected Members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Head of Democratic Services to make the necessary arrangements.

Elizabeth Morton  
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

19 October 2007  
JMcG/SR

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Information received from CIPFA on 10 September 2007.

Any person wishing to inspect the background paper relative to this report should contact Julie McGarry, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576147. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Tel No (01563) 576135.

**Implementation Officer: Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services.**