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## Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

### *Member Management Committee*

Date: 8 October 2008

Subject: Member Development

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### Executive Summary

The Member Development Working Group meets on a regular basis to formulate, progress and monitor Member Development activities. Over the last quarter this has included work on the following projects:

- Creation of the draft Member Development Strategy 2008 to 2011
- Events programme for 2008-09
- Other learning and development initiatives, such as personal development planning, mentoring and advanced studies at the University of Huddersfield.

This report provides Member Management Committee with an update on progress with the above initiatives and seeks comments on the draft Member Development Strategy. It also provides a brief summary of this year's induction programme.

This year the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate Functions) plans to conduct an inquiry into Member Development. Details of the scope of the inquiry are included in this report.

## **1.0 Purpose of the report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on training and development issues relating to elected Members. Specifically, this report contains the following items:

- Draft Member Development Strategy for 2008 to 2011
- Detail of the proposed events programme for autumn/winter 2008-9
- Review of this year's induction for new Members
- Summary of other on-going projects, including mentoring
- Details of the planned scrutiny review of Member Development.

## **2.0 Background information**

2.1 Member Development is a key component of the Council's Annual Corporate Governance Statement, specifically in relation to the principle of *Developing Skills and Capacity*, where the Council states that it will ensure that those charged with the governance of the Council have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well. In order to have clear goals and outcomes, a strategy detailing direction of travel and having clear, measurable objectives is required.

2.2 The previous strategy for 2006 to 2008 is now out of date, and a new Member Development Strategy is required for this municipal year. It is important that this document provides clear links to the Leeds Strategic and Business plans in order to provide relevant and strategic learning programmes.

2.3 A draft Strategy, based on outcomes of discussions at the Member Development Working Group and consultation with other relevant stakeholders, has been prepared.

2.4 In addition to work on the draft Strategy, the Working Group have put together a number of training programmes and projects for the 2008-9 period.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

### Member Development Strategy – 2008 to 2011

3.1 The Member Development Strategy 2008 to 2011 is based on the themes of core and role-specific skills, induction and personal development planning. As part of the planning process, the Working Group undertook an exercise to identify key drivers for Member Development over the next few years, and as a result, the following 'core skills' were identified: Leading the Community, Partnership Working, Governing the City, Leadership and Managing Yourself. These core skills will be used to identify personal learning needs and will shape the annual events programme.

3.2 The Member Development Working Group puts forward the strategy as attached at Appendix A and recommends that it be endorsed by the Member Management Committee. In order to further demonstrate its commitment to Member development, the Member Management Committee is asked to consider endorsing the foreword remarks (see page 2 of the strategy document).

## Member Development Activities

- 3.3 The Working Group have devised a number of learning projects for 2008-9:
- **Financial Management training.** This is a programme of practical and interactive events, including sessions on the Budget, Budget Monitoring and Capital Accounting. The latter two events are aimed particularly at Executive and Deputy Executive Members. Sessions will take place both during the day and at tea-time, and can be repeated according to demand.
  - **Scrutiny Skills programme.** This builds on the successful Chairs event which took place in June. Sessions include 'Making an Impact', 'Developing Community Engagement' and a follow-up to the popular regional event for Chairs, as well as visits to other high-performing authorities and a Select Committee session at the House of Commons.
  - **Regulatory programme.** The annual Planning Update and Governance and Conduct sessions have now been scheduled. Attendance will be closely monitored and reported to the Whips, as agreed previously.
  - **Events programme.** A number of other short events have been planned for autumn and spring 2009. These include: 'The Compact for Leeds', 'Understanding Housing Law', 'Leeds and the City Region', 'Risk Awareness: Dealing with Children and Vulnerable Adults'.
  - **Personal Development Plans (PDPs).** Discussions have been undertaken with Whips and Deputy Whips regarding the best way to carry out PDP discussions. It has been generally agreed that the most effective method is for the Member Development Officer to carry them out, liaising closely with the Group Whip/Deputy in order to share learning needs information that could be used for succession planning within the Group.

## Induction programme 2008

- 3.4 This year's induction programme commenced on 12<sup>th</sup> May, and included the following events: Finding your Feet (an introduction to Group Offices, allowances, pensions etc), Code of Conduct, How the Council Works, Local Government Finance, Speaking in the Chamber and Media Skills. A number of events were shared with existing councillors.
- 3.4 Feedback from individual events, and about the programme in general indicated that the induction was very successful in helping new Members to gain skills and knowledge quickly and effectively. All events were rated as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.
- 3.5 All new Members completed the compulsory elements and attendance improved from 2007 (feedback indicates that this was due to the advance notice sent to candidates and the one week gap between elections and the start of the induction programme).
- 3.6 Feedback comments from new Members will be used to improve individual sessions and any future programmes as a whole. The new Members are now undergoing PDP discussions in order to identify outstanding training needs and any skills gaps.

## Member Development projects

3.7 A number of additional projects are taking place this autumn:

- **University of Huddersfield – Postgraduate Certificate in Local Modernisation.**

Capacity-building funds have been identified by LGYH (Local Government Yorkshire and Humber) to fund places on this course for councillors across the region. Members from Leeds were asked if they would like to attend and six requested a place. All six have now formally taken up their places and the course will start, with an induction event, on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the course will be carried out following completion of the second term (March 2009).

- **IDeA Mentoring Scheme.**

Each council in West Yorkshire was offered a sum of £4,000 to spend on a mentoring project, which enables three councillors to be mentored by senior, experienced councillors from other authorities. Three Members from the main political groups at Leeds have now been identified and suitable matches found from core cities or London boroughs. Mentoring will take the form of meetings, shadowing and telephone/email support, and will start this autumn. The aim of the project is to improve individuals' personal capacity, skills and learning, thus enabling them to take on more senior civic roles.

## Scrutiny inquiry into Member Development

3.8 At its meeting on 7th July, Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate Functions) resolved to undertake an Inquiry into Member Development.

3.9 This has been driven by comments made by the Improvement and Development Agency assessors when considering Leeds' submission for the Member Development Charter award. Whilst acknowledging the quality and effectiveness of Leeds' provision, the assessors stressed the importance of continuous improvement. Their report made a number of suggestions, including the recommendation to undertake a Scrutiny review of Member Development.

3.10 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- Effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy and existing training provision for Members in terms of:
  - Timing, format and relevance of events
  - Marketing and promotion of training
  - Evaluation of training initiatives and return on investment.
- Extent to which Member Development is Member-led
- Provision of resources and budget to support the function.

3.11 It is hoped that this review will provide the Member Development function with some practical recommendations which can be used to further improve its effectiveness.

## **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 4.1 As the role of Members is complex and demanding, dedicated learning and development strategies which support Members and help them to lead the organisation are essential requirements for any Council.
- 4.2 Member development is recognised by organisations such as the Audit Commission and Improvement and Development Agency as a key means of building capacity in local government. Good practice is demonstrated by strategic planning on an individual and corporate basis, and can be evidenced by the existence of a learning and development strategy and individual development plans. In addition, the Charter for Member Development requires the Council to have both a Member Development Strategy and Personal Development Plans for the majority of Members in place.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Expenditure to deliver the Member Development Strategy and associated events will be contained within the 2008-11 budget allocation.
- 5.2 Programmes such as Successful Scrutiny, mentoring and University of Huddersfield courses will be part-funded by regional capacity-building monies.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to:
- endorse the Member Development Strategy 2008 to 2011 at Appendix A, including the Foreword
  - note the contents of this report, in particular the plans to scrutinise the Member Development function.

### Background Papers

None Used