



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 4 March 2009

Subject: Member Development

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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:

- Consideration of the second stage Member Development Charter award – ‘CharterPlus’ and the requirements for achieving its standards
- Progressing work on personal development planning and the on-going learning and development events programme.

This report provides Member Management Committee with an update on progress with the above initiatives and seeks comments on the proposals to achieve CharterPlus by February 2010. It also provides a summary of learning and development activity and conferences for the 2008-9 period to date (see Appendix 2).

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:

- Description of the CharterPlus award, and details of the steps required to achieve its standards
- Detail of the proposed events programme for spring/summer 2009 and an update on other learning and development activity
- Summary of learning and development and conference activity undertaken by Members this municipal year to date.

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.

2.2 In February 2007 the Council was awarded the Member Development Charter following a stringent assessment process by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). Leeds was the second Core City to achieve the award and as a result has often been approached by other authorities to share knowledge, provide advice and share experiences since that date.

2.3 The award, like Investors in People, remains current for 3 years, after which time it must be reassessed to ascertain whether the standards are still being met.

2.4 The Council will therefore be reassessed against the Charter standards in February 2010. At this time we will also have the option of going for a higher-level award; CharterPlus. The aim of this 'harder test' is to stretch and challenge those authorities who are already performing well within the Charter standards. It also takes into account changing expectations and good practice in relation to learning and development.

2.5 Given the additional commitment required from both Members and officers, Members are asked to consider whether or not to endorse a submission for the CharterPlus award.

3.0 Main Issues

Member Development Charter and CharterPlus

3.1 Councils must provide evidence of how they perform against a number of additional criteria in order to meet the standards of CharterPlus. We already meet a number of these; however there are others which will require work in order to bridge the gap. The more challenging criteria are as follows:

- 'That **Member role descriptions** exist and are maintained for all key roles including Ward Councillor. The role descriptions are used to help identify development needs.'

A generic role description already exists for the Ward Councillor role, and a knowledge specification is also in place and used for Members on the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (see Appendix 1). It is likely that role descriptions/knowledge specifications will need to be drawn up for all roles attracting a special responsibility allowance, and for this reason Members are asked to consider the implications of putting this in place.

- That all Councillors are offered **personal development plans** (PDPs) and over 50% take up the opportunity.

A requirement of the current Charter is for Councils to simply demonstrate that a process for the identification of learning needs is in place; however CharterPlus requires Councils to show that a minimum of 50% of Members take part in the personal development planning process.

PDPs are currently taking place with approximately 30 discussions carried out to date. It should be noted that this number would need to increase significantly in order to meet the requirements of CharterPlus.

- 3.2 A regional associate, Kath Lindley, has recently been appointed to Local Government Yorkshire and Humber to assist authorities in the region with their submissions for the CharterPlus award. Kath will be providing support materials, such as generic role descriptions, which can be adapted by Councils to suit their needs. In addition she will be running workshops for Member Development Officers to ensure that work is not duplicated across the region.
- 3.3 In considering whether or not to endorse a decision to commit to CharterPlus, Members should note the commitment required from both officers and Members in order to meet the additional criteria outlined in paragraph 3.1.
- 3.4 If it is felt at this stage that February 2010 is too soon to commit to a submission for CharterPlus, it is proposed that the Member Development Working Group continue to strive towards the standards of the award and continue to use the relevant criteria to shape their work programme over the coming year.

Member Development Activities

- 3.5 The Working Group has devised a number of learning projects for 2008-9, and progress with a number of these initiatives is described below. Where specific projects (such as the University of Huddersfield course and the IDeA mentoring scheme) are drawing to a close, a full evaluation will be carried out and reported to the next meeting of this Committee.
- **Regulatory programme.** The annual Planning Update sessions have now taken place and, with the exception of one panel Member and two substitutes, full attendance was noted. Plans are underway to ensure that these Members receive mop-up training within the municipal year. The compulsory Governance and Conduct sessions are ongoing and will conclude in early March. Attendance at these events will also be closely monitored and reported to the Whips, as agreed previously.
 - **Events programme.** A number of short events have been advertised for winter/spring 2009 and are currently taking place. The spring/summer programme is currently being drawn-up by the Working Group and is likely to include events on community engagement, corporate parenting, ICT, negotiating

and influencing, and topical issues of interest to Members. In addition, the outcomes of PDPs will be used to determine other courses or learning initiatives to meet individual and group needs (see below).

- **Personal Development Plans (PDPs).** The Member Development Officer is currently undertaking PDPs with individual Members, and will liaise with the Group Whips/Deputies in order to share learning needs information that could be used for succession planning within the Group.

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 award of charter marks such as the existing Member Development Charter.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 Assessment for the Member Development Charter, or Charter Plus, will be in the region of £500. There is currently no additional provision to meet this cost and it would therefore need to be met from the 2009-10 Member Development budget allocation.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to:
- consider whether or not to endorse a commitment to achieving CharterPlus in February 2010
 - note the contents of this report, in particular the attendance summary at Appendix 2.

Background Papers

None Used