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**Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer**

**Executive Board**

**13<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**Response to the Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board Inquiry into 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

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board Inquiry into Member Management and details the response of the Chief Democratic Services Officer.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report provides the Executive Board with details of the recommendations from the recent Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board Inquiry into Member Management and details the response of the Chief Democratic Services Officer to these recommendations.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board conducted an inquiry into Member Management between December 2008 and February 2009. This Inquiry was undertaken following a recommendation made by IDeA assessors on the award of the Member Development Charter. The Scrutiny Board Inquiry report is attached at appendix 1. The report makes six recommendations for action.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Each of the Scrutiny Board's six recommendations are listed below along with a response from the Chief Democratic Services Officer.

### Recommendations One

*That the Member Development Officer discusses with Directors how training and support mechanisms for officers delivering learning and development activities for Members can be developed.*

- 3.2 The Chief Democratic Services Officer supports this recommendation. A considerable amount of training is provided in-house and is highly valued. However it is acknowledged that whilst skilled in their field of expertise some officers may not be skilled 'trainers'. Efforts to make improvements in this area are also supported by the Member Development Working Group chaired by Councillor Latty.

### Recommendation Two

*That the Member Development Officer works with Group Support Managers and Group Whips in a more proactive way to promote the importance of Personal Development Plans and to prepare to increase the number of completed PDPs.*

- 3.3 The Chief Democratic Services Officer supports this recommendation and steps have already been taken to achieve this, resulting in an increase in the number of PDPs having been undertaken since the beginning of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry.

### Recommendation Three

*That all Executive Board Members and Group Whips undertake a PDP so as to demonstrate their support for Member Development as an ongoing process.*

- 3.4 Whilst supportive of the principle that *all* elected Members undertake a PDP, the Chief Democratic Services Officer comments that the implementation of this recommendation is not within his powers to implement without a commitment from individual elected Members.

## Recommendations Four and Five

*That the Member Development Officer, as a matter of routine, shares feedback with event presenters and publishes event feedback on the Council's Intranet site.*

*That course evaluation forms be reviewed with the aim of capturing more feedback and more useful data.*

*That for role specific training, officer/member groups are established to evaluate the effectiveness of such training and to provide feedback to the Member Development Officer.*

- 3.5 The Chief Democratic Services Officer supports these recommendations. Evaluation and feedback is essential in order to assess the effectiveness of training and also to demonstrate to others the benefit of development opportunities.

## Recommendation Six

*That the Council commits in principle to achieve CharterPlus in February 2010 and that the final decision is made after the external pre-assessment in autumn 2009.*

- 3.6 The Chief Democratic Services Officer supports this recommendation, particularly the principle of making the final decision after an external pre-assessment. The adoption of CharterPlus can be achieved within existing resources.

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

- 4.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 If agreed, the implementation of the above recommendations would be met within existing resources and incorporated into the work plan of the Member Development section for 2009/10.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

- 6.1 To recommend that the Executive Board approves the proposed responses outlined in this report.

## Background Papers

The Scrutiny Board Inquiry report.