



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 12 January 2011

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 six months this has included work on the following projects:

- Progressing work on learning and development projects such as induction and personal development planning
- Undertaking exit interviews for Members stepping down or not re-elected
- Reviewing attendance and feedback from the 2010-11 events programme and the Member Learning Days
- Monitoring attendance and evaluating the compulsory Planning and Licensing Programme.

This report provides Member Management Committee with an update on progress with the above projects and planned activities for remainder of the year.

1.0 Purpose of this 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:

- Update on progress with learning and development initiatives devised by the Member Development Working Group
- Findings from the exit interviews of Members who stepped down in 2010
- Update on personal development planning
- Detail of attendance at the compulsory regulatory sessions.

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 The Council was awarded 'Charter Plus' status in June 2010. As an exemplar authority, Leeds is expected to share good practice and become a lead authority in regard to innovative and effective practice. This is resulting in an increase in regional activity (eg Leeds' hosting events, supporting a regional network and acting a hub for key learning activities).

2.3 Charter Plus also stipulates that Members must be able to describe how learning and development activities have helped them as individuals to carry out their role, and that Members are able to identify what changes and improvements have taken place as a result of their learning. More effective methods of evaluation are being undertaken in order to demonstrate how learning is providing value for money and demonstrating return on investment.

2.4 The Member Development Working Group leads on all issues relating to Member Development, instigating development sessions, monitoring attendance and evaluating their effectiveness.

3.0 Main Issues

Induction 2010

3.1 A comprehensive programme for new Members (and existing Members where appropriate) took place between May and July this year. As in previous years, the programme included basic events to ensure that Members are equipped with key information to get started, in addition to events tailored to specific roles.

3.2 This year the programme included a number of events which were shared with the four other West Yorkshire authorities (these included Licensing, Managing Casework, Induction for Governance and Audit Committee Members, Working through the Red Mist: Handling Difficult Situations and Managing Time and Prioritising). Sharing events in this way brought the following benefits:

- Reduction in cost by avoiding duplication
- Avoidance of event cancellations due to higher take-up

- Opportunity for new Members to network and build relationships outside the authority.
- 3.3 Leeds was the preferred venue due to its central location and transport links and this had further benefits for Leeds' Members.
- 3.4 Due to the benefits outlined above it has been proposed to collaborate further on induction and other events regionally. A number of large-scale regional events have since taken place in Leeds, including courses on Shared Services and Social Media.
- 3.5 All induction events were evaluated as 'excellent' or 'good'. Further evaluation took place in December 2010 in the form of Induction focus groups. New Members came together to review the programme and the impact it had had on them. Both sessions proved extremely useful and a number of improvements and new ideas were identified, including:
- Sessions to be compressed into first 5 or 6 weeks following election to ensure high turn-out
 - Include dates of key meetings in the programme so that new Members can attend in a shadowing capacity (Executive Board, Scrutiny etc)
 - Consider greater involvement of existing Members in the Induction programme
 - Introduce a 'buddying' scheme (new Member matched with a senior officer)
 - Provide written information about each service area (structure charts, key contacts etc)
 - Include a session on Area Management.
- 3.6 This year exit interviews were offered to every councillor who stepped down or who was not re-elected. Four Members took up the offer (three had face-to-face interviews, one completed a questionnaire). A number of common issues were identified and findings from the interviews were taken back to the Working Group for consideration. The key themes arising were:
- Potential barriers caused by employers who lack understanding of councillor role and benefits it can bring to the organisation
 - Impact and influence of group politics and negative perception of certain meetings, eg full Council
 - Support for members in split wards
 - Formality and cultural aspects surrounding member/officer relations.
- 3.7 Procedures for the process stipulate that anonymity will be assured and that any findings are generalised so that individuals cannot be identified.
- 3.8 For future years it is proposed that a report summarising the findings from exit interviews is presented to the first Member Management Committee meeting of the municipal year. It is also suggested that MMC are involved in reviewing the question template and procedures to ensure that relevant information is obtained from the process.

Personal Development Planning

- 3.9 A stipulation of Charter Plus is that a minimum of 50% of Members have active PDPs. As this figure was exceeded in the 2008-9 period, the Working Group felt that a 'light touch' review of PDPs would be more appropriate this year. To date, 30

PDPs have been undertaken. A number of learning needs have been identified, the following being the most common:

- ICT (including Casework system)
- Social Media/Media skills
- Charing Skills
- Corporate Parenting
- Scrutiny Skills.

3.10 The learning needs are being addressed through one-to-one training, courses, regional events and coaching/mentoring.

3.11 Where Members have identified additional learning needs (ie due to a change in role or gaining additional responsibilities), the Member Development Officer is working with them individually to identify suitable individual learning solutions.

Learning and Development days

3.12 This year a proportion of learning and development is taking place over four 'Learning and Development' days. These days are clearly identified in the Council diary, and spaced at regular intervals, allowing Members to plan their attendance in advance.

3.13 A total of 30 Members attended various sessions and one-to-one events on the first learning day (24 September). Nineteen attended the second day on 30 November.

3.14 The majority of learning activity taking place on the learning days is the compulsory events for regulatory panel members. Two Planning events and two Governance and Conduct events have taken place to date, with attendance as follows:

- Planning Update – 22 out of 29 Members attended (a further Member subsequently attended a Kirklees session)
- Governance and Conduct – 18 out of 42 Members attended. A further session is planned alongside a Licensing Update on 27 January.

3.15 Depending on attendance on 27 January, further Licensing and Governance and Conduct sessions may take place. It is proposed that the six Members who were unable to attend the Planning Update are invited on similar events at neighbouring authorities so that they are able to fulfil the compulsory element of the training. Full attendance figures and evaluation data from the regulatory programme will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

Future events

3.16 The Member Development Working Group are planning a number of events and programmes for the remainder of 2010-11. These include:

- Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding
- Emerging Public Health landscape and role of the Council
- Building Resilient Communities (regional event for West Yorkshire authorities)
- City region – Local Enterprise Partnerships.

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 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 and Charter Plus.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 Any funding required to deliver the 2010-11 programme will be met from the existing Member Development budget.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to note the on-going Member development programme and consider the best mechanism for the future reporting of findings from exit interviews, as outlined in 3.8.

Background Papers

None Used