



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 20th February 2007

Subject: Member Development

Electoral Wards Affected:

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:

- Roll-out of the compulsory programme of learning and development for members of Regulatory Panels
- Preparation for attaining the Charter for Member Development
- Provision of a programme of training for Lead Members.

This report provides Member Management Committee with an update on progress with the above initiatives and an opportunity to comment on current provision.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides Member Management Committee with an update on the following Member learning and development projects and initiatives:

- Training for planning and licensing members
- The Charter for Member Development
- Training for Lead Members.

2.0 Training for Planning and Licensing Members

Background Information

2.1 The concept of making training and development compulsory for all Licensing and Regulatory Panel members was agreed by Member Management Committee at its meeting on 29 June 2006. The Committee then charged the Member Development Working Group with designing the training programmes.

2.2 The Member Development Working Group, chaired by Cllr Latty, has since met on a number of occasions to put together a draft training programme covering Planning, Licensing and general governance and conduct issues. This programme commenced on 20th November 2006.

Main Issues

2.3 To date, five modules have taken place. A summary of attendance and evaluation is provided below:

Event	No./% of Members required to attend who attended	Apologies	Evaluation Rating	Evaluation Comments
Taxi and Private Hire Issues – 20 November 2006	6 (67%)	3 (in advance)	Good	'Useful refresher'
Introduction to Planning – 28 November 2006 and 9th January 2007	19 ¹	2 (in advance)	Excellent	'Good refresher', 'Knowledgeable presenter', 'Learnt something new', 'Liked case study approach', 'This will help me make better judgements'
Governance and Conduct	6 (14%) Two further sessions planned.	3 (after event)	Very Good	'Enjoyed board game/competitive element', 'Lots of detail – could be shorter', 'Good presenters'

¹ This session was not compulsory as there were no new Members appointed to Plans Panel in 2006

Planning Update – 14 December 2006	15 (50%) One further session planned.	2 (in advance) 2 Members left event near start	Good	'Vital update on new legislation'

Half way through the programme 20 Members out of the 42 that need to attend sessions have (48%). Six other Members have attended events voluntarily.

The feedback provided by Members has already been used to amend and improve the events for future participants. A follow-up questionnaire about the programme will be circulated to all participants from February 2007, in order to measure the effectiveness of the programme as a whole.

- 2.4 A number of Members have been unable to commit to training dates due to work, family or health commitments. These Members will be offered one-to-one or small group sessions (to be provided by officers) as soon as the main programme is complete.

Implications for Policy and Governance

- 2.5 To date, only two Members have failed to make contact regarding the training programme. Efforts are continually being made to ensure that all Members are provided with the training required; either as part of the group sessions or as a one-to-one briefing. It is therefore envisaged that all the relevant Members will have fulfilled their training requirements by the end of this municipal year. This will ensure that the councillors concerned have the facility enabling them to undertake their Council duties and are able to make effective and informed decisions and ensure good governance.

Legal and Resource Implications

- 2.6 The planning training is being undertaken by external trainers at a cost of £6,000 for four half-day sessions per year. This cost will be met by the Development Department. Licensing training and governance training will be carried out in-house and be met within existing resources.

Conclusions

- 2.7 The evidence gained so far from trainer and delegate feedback indicates that the programme is proving to be a successful and popular initiative. Evaluation will continue, to ensure that it is also an effective means of assisting Members to develop and fulfill their roles to their full capacity.

3.0 Charter for Member Development

Background Information

- 3.1 Since autumn 2005, the Council has been working towards achieving the national Charter for Member Development. This autumn, the Leaders of the five groups and the Chief Executive signed a Commitment Statement, demonstrating all-party commitment to the principles of the Charter.

- 3.2 On Tuesday 19th December the Council undertook a 'pre-assessment' in order to find out whether it was ready for formal assessment. This process involved a series of interviews between the assessor Mike Leitch (Local Government Yorkshire and Humber) and a cross-section of Members and officers.

Main Issues

- 3.3 As a result of the pre-assessment day, Leeds was found to meet the majority of the charter objectives. The assessor was particularly impressed by the following:
- The involvement of Members in the development and monitoring of Member Development, through the Working Group
 - New initiatives such as the 'Everything you ever wanted to know about...' seminar series and the Planning and Licensing programme
 - The way in which Member Development is promoted and publicised, e.g. through the notice board and intranet site.
- 3.4 One area requiring clarification is the link between Member Development and corporate priorities. This gap will be closed through the regular provision of reports and updates to Corporate Management Team. This is the first such update.
- 3.5 Once this area is addressed, we will be able to be formally assessed. This will take the form of interviews with the Leader of Council, the Chief Executive and around 5 other Members and officers. It is envisaged that the assessment and award of the Charter will take place by the end of March 2007. The award of the Charter will involve a presentation ceremony, award of a commemorative plaque and invitation to a celebration event. If successful Leeds will be the largest Met to receive the award and the second Core City. (Manchester already has the award)

Implications for Policy and Governance

- 3.6 The Charter for Member Development is a national award which recognises excellence in the area of learning and development for elected Members. Achieving the award will publicly acknowledge the commitment of Members and officers to developing the capacity of both new and existing councillors.

Legal and Resource Implications

- 3.7 The cost of formal assessment, which is undertaken by the Head of Organisational Development, Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber, and an IDeA-accredited Member peer is £500. This will be met from within the current Member Development budget.

4.0 Training for Lead Members

- 4.1 At the meeting of 29th June 2006, Member Management Committee endorsed the Working Group's proposal to develop a programme of learning and development for Lead Members.
- 4.2 Since that date, the Working Group has undertaken a research exercise into the skills and knowledge requirements of Lead Members. This has involved a survey and interviews with both Lead and Executive Members.
- 4.3 Evidence collated to date has identified that an appropriate programme for Lead Members would involve development in both soft skills (influencing, prioritising etc)

and hard skills (understanding local government finance). The following learning modules for Lead Members are therefore proposed:

- Understanding finance and budgets
- Managing performance effectively
- Influencing and negotiating
- Prioritising issues and briefing Executive Members.

4.4 Before developing this programme further it is also proposed that the role of a Lead Member is clarified by setting out a 'role description' for the portfolio covered. This has been suggested by a number of Members. The Working Group feel that this step is necessary to clarify what the role entails what the key duties are, thereby helping to ascertain what skills are required to carry it out effectively.

Implications for Policy and Governance

4.5 Lead Members have a vital role to play in ensuring that departments are effectively run, fully accountable and that any decisions made are open and transparent. An effective programme of training and development for this group will ensure that they are able to fulfill their roles to the best of their ability.

Legal and Resource Implications

4.6 The cost of any training modules identified will be met from within the Member Development budget. It should be noted that the limitations to this budget will mean that the training will be delivered by in-house resources.

Conclusions

4.7 It is proposed that the Working Group initially draft a role description for Lead Members for wider discussion with a view to using this document to finalise the learning and development programme.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and approve the following recommendations:

- Request the Member Development Working Group to put together a draft role description for Lead Members
- Request the Working Group to put together a draft programme of learning and development for Lead Members, based on the role description and modules identified in section 4.3.