



Report of the Chief Officer, Democratic and Central Services

Member Management Committee

Date: 1 July 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

1. This report provides the Member Management Committee with the Member Development Annual Report 2010-11. The Annual Report details the achievements made in 2010-11 and outlines the actions to be taken in 2011-12.
2. This report also proposes that a review of the compulsory training programme for Members on Plans Panels and Licensing Committees is undertaken. The report proposes that a number of ideas for refreshing the content, methods and format are implemented in 2011-12.
3. The Member Development Working Group was established in December 2005. This Member group is key to the continuing improvement of Member Development and is essential for the Council maintaining Charter Plus status. It is proposed therefore that the group be reinstated for the 2011-12 municipal year.

Recommendations

4. The Member Management Committee is asked to note the contents of the Member Development Annual Report 2010-11, to comment on proposals to improve the regulatory training programme for 2011-12 and to agree the continuation of the Member Development Working Group and determine its membership.

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:

- the Member Development Annual Report 2010-11
- proposals to improve the compulsory learning programme for Planning and Licensing Members
- a recommendation to reinstate the Member Development Working Group for 2011-12.

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. A key element of this is ensuring that Member development activity is member-led, and authorities are asked to demonstrate this through the establishment and ongoing development of a Member Working Group.

2.3 One important aspect of the Member development programme is the compulsory learning programme for members of Plans and Licensing panels. Currently, Members appointed to these panels must attend one legislation update event and one governance and conduct event every year. In addition, any new Members serving on a panel must attend training before sitting on the committee and taking decisions. A well-established programme of training has taken place over the past four years; the Member Development Working Group now feel that a review and refresh of the content, format and trainers should be undertaken in order to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of Members and provides an effective learning experience.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 This report presents the Member Development Annual Report 2010-11. The report details the achievements made this municipal year, and provides a summary of the development courses, events and activities undertaken by elected Members over the course of the year. It also presents a number of proposals for improved ways of working in 2011.

3.2 The proposals for improvement outlined in the Annual Report include some suggestions for refreshing the compulsory programme of training for Plans and Licensing Members. The current programme has been extremely effective, and feedback from the programme has generally been excellent. However, given that a number of Members generally undergo the same experience every year, it was felt

that it would be timely to review the format, training providers and methods used in order to keep it stimulating and relevant. For this reason a number of suggestions for improvement have been made:

- use a different training provider for the Planning element of the training in order to provide a fresh approach (a potential supplier has already been identified)
- maintain the compulsory legislative updates (as specified in the Constitution) for both Planning and Licensing, but widen the Planning programme to include non-compulsory learning elements such as:
 - A range of regional 'specialist' events on subjects such as the Localism Bill, enforcement, planning design, conservation, flood risk etc
 - Bus tours and/or review sessions which allow Members to revisit sites where development has taken place, and consider the impact of the decisions that were taken.
- postpone the Governance and Conduct element of the training until early 2012, pending clarification of the future of the Standards regime and the publication of draft Localism Bill regulations.

Members are asked for their views on the options above. Further discussion on the planning elements of the training will take place with the joint officer/member planning group on 7th June and feedback from this meeting will be provided to Member Management Committee.

3.3 A Member Development Working Group consisting of a representative from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green groups was established by Member Management Committee in December 2005. In 2010-11 the group comprised Cllr Graham Hyde (Chair), Cllr David Blackburn, Cllr Brenda Lancaster and Cllr Matthew Robinson.

3.4 The Member Development Working Group is instrumental in devising the array of learning and development opportunities that are available to Members. The group works on key projects such as the Member Development Strategy, new Members' induction and the annual event programme and is essential for the Council maintaining the Member Development Charter award. This report proposes that the Group continues in 2011-12.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 The requirement for Members to undergo compulsory training is outlined in Part 5 of the Constitution ((j) Code of Practice for the Determination of Planning Matters) and ((l) Code of Practice for the Determination of Licensing Matters). The proposals to improve the compulsory programme contained in this report, whilst enhancing and improving what is offered, would not require any amendments to the Constitution.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 Any proposals for additional training outlined in this report will be met from within the existing Member Development budget.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to:

- note the Member Development Annual Report 2010-11
- comment on the proposals for improving the compulsory Planning and Licensing programme
- agree the continuation of the Member Development Working Group as proposed in paragraph 3.3 and advise on its membership.

Background Papers

None Used