

TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 21st SEPTEMBER 2004

SUBJECT: ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

FROM: CORPORATE PERSONNEL SERVICES AND MEMBERS'S SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To explore the possibilities for improving the development opportunities for Elected Members and to make recommendations to the Executive on the options available.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Elected Member development has always been taken seriously at Warwick District Council and various methods have been tried to ensure that Members needs have been met.
- 2.2 The recent submission to the CPA inspectors described the work that has been done since the elections in 1995 in providing support for new and existing Members. It also acknowledged the difficulties experienced in adjusting to the new arrangements of Executive and Scrutiny and the need for a further development of the scrutiny function.
- 2.3 It has been difficult to establish a robust framework for Member development that enables all members to participate in, and gain what they need, from a development programme. This is a challenge for many Councils and in response to this the West Midlands Local Government Association have launched the West Midlands Member Development Charter.
- 2.4 The Charter provides the opportunity for this Council to review its approach to member development and for this Committee to make some recommendations on possible ways forward in this area. Under the Constitution the consideration of Member Development is not included in the remit of the Employment Committee and therefore the Committee can only make recommendations.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The details of the West Midlands Member Development Charter are attached at appendix 1. It is suggested that the Committee considers the merits of the scheme and decides whether or not to recommend that the Council signs up to the Charter
- 3.2 The Council has previously agreed to the membership of other bodies to support member development and it would be appropriate to review these at the same time as considering the above Charter. Details of these are included at appendix 2.
- 3.3 A summary of the Members training budget is included at appendix 3 along with some potential areas of known development need. The Committee may wish to recommend to the Executive some guidance on the expenditure of the remaining budget for 2004/05.

3. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The provision of training and development for Elected Members sits within the overall Council policy of being an Investor in People employer.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee considers the West Midlands Development Charter and decides whether to recommend that Warwick District Council should sign up.
- 4.2 The Committee considers the membership of the Local Government Information Unit and the Warwick University Local Authorities Research Consortium and decides which, if either or both, it wishes to subscribe to.
- 4.3 The Committee considers whether it wishes to make a recommendation that the consideration of member development becomes part of the remit of the Employment Committee
- 4.4 The Committee considers making any recommendation to the Executive regarding guidance on the expenditure of the remaining Members training budget for 2004/05

Karen Pearce
Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel)
Robert Inman
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Areas in District Affected: None **Key Decision:** No

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THE WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

Improving Performance of Local Authorities through Elected Member Development

The West Midlands Charter has been developed with the help and support of the North West Regional Employers building on the experience of their well established and successful regional member development charter

THE CHARTER - WHAT IS IT AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Any authority dedicated to meeting the needs of it's community, must be committed to developing it's elected members. The evolving modernisation agenda has placed increasing emphasis on authorities to rethink their approach to member support and development. The impact is such that a majority of authorities across the region have some form of support programme in place; however, approach, levels of commitment, effectiveness and progress vary considerably. Therefore, the regional Charter has a number of objectives:

- To ensure authorities delivery quality leadership and services to their public
- To raise the level of performance of those responsible for the political management and direction of the authority
- To raise the profile of, and encourage commitment to member development
- To raise the standard of member development and support across the region
- To recognise those authorities who have demonstrated their commitment and achievement

It is important to emphasis that this **is not** about trophy hunting, **it is not** about getting another plaque on the wall, **it is not** about ticking the boxes to get accreditation. **Quite simply the purpose of the Charter is to improve the performance of local authorities, through the development of elected members.**

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The following outlines the key stages in working towards the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

KEY STAGES

Stage One - Signing up to the Charter

It is recognised that authorities will inevitably vary in the provision of development opportunities for members. Irrespective of this all authorities can sign up.

Authorities who want to participate have to sign up to the charter, thus demonstrating their commitment to improving performance through the development of their elected members. At the point of signing up your authority must specify a date by which they will have achieved the Charter, or key milestones within it (see page 3)

Stage Two – Improving the development of elected members

Your authority will work towards achieving the Charter, or key milestones within it (see page 3)

Stage Three - Assessment

When your authority considers it has everything in place to demonstrate it has achieved the Charter, or key milestones within the Charter, an on site assessment will be carried out by a trained small team of elected members and officers.

Stage Four - Awarding the Charter

When your authority has been assessed and achieved the Charter, or key milestones within the Charter, they will receive their award at an annual celebration event.

Stage Five - Re-assessment

Once awarded, the Charter has a life span of 2 years, after which your authority will be required to submit details of how it has sustained the standard, this will be judged by a small trained team of elected members and officers undertaking a desk top review.

THE WEST MIDLANDS CHARTER - THE STANDARDS

The following details the Charter and the key milestones within it.

In order to be awarded the **Charter** your authority must have the following in place:

- A corporate annual plan developed in consultation with members which outlines what the priority development needs are, how they link to achieving the corporate objectives of the authority; how they will be met and by when
- The allocation of financial resources to deliver the development needs as detailed in the annual plan
- An approach that guarantees each member a minimum of an annual development review with the group leader/senior members or nominated members; which is monitored on a 6 monthly basis.
- An induction process that includes:
 - A mechanism to engage with members prior to their commencement to inform a tailored induction plan
 - An introduction to the Member Charter
 - Buddying/mentoring/personal support scheme established and available to all new members for a minimum of 6 months
 - A review after 6 months for new members, which includes an evaluation of the induction process
- An approach to member development that seeks to both attract diversity of elected members, and supports their specific development needs
- A process to ensure officers and members involved in supporting the implementation of the Charter, receive appropriate training/support to carry out their responsibilities
- Designated officer support to ensure the delivery of the above
- A mechanism to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the member development process

THE WEST MIDLANDS CHARTER – INTERMEDIATE AWARD

In order to achieve the **intermediate** award your authority must have in place:

- A corporate annual plan developed in consultation with members which outlines what the priority development needs are, how they link to achieving the corporate objectives of the authority; how they will be met and by when
- The allocation of financial resources to deliver the development needs as detailed in the annual plan
- An approach that guarantees each member a minimum of an annual development review with the group leader/senior members or nominated members; which is monitored on a 6 monthly basis.
- An induction process that includes:
 - A mechanism to engage with members prior to their commencement to inform a tailored induction plan
 - An introduction to the Member Charter
 - A review after 6 months for members, which includes an evaluation of the induction process
- An approach to member development that seeks to both attract diversity of elected members, and supports their specific development needs
- A process to ensure officers and members involved in supporting the implementation of the Charter, receive appropriate training/support to carry out their responsibilities
- Allocation of officer support to ensure the delivery of the above
- A mechanism to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the member development process

THE WEST MIDLANDS CHARTER - PRIMARY AWARD

In order to achieve the **primary** award your authority must have in place:

- A corporate annual plan developed in consultation with members which outlines what the priority development needs are, how they link to achieving the corporate objectives of the authority; how they will be met and by when
- The allocation of financial resources to deliver the development needs as detailed in the annual plan
- An agreed approach that offers members an annual development review
- An induction process that includes:
 - A standardised induction for all members
 - A introduction to the Member Charter
 - A review after 6 months for new members, which includes an evaluation of the induction process
- An approach to member development that seeks to both attract diversity of elected members, and supports their specific development needs
- A process to ensure officers and members involved in supporting the implementation of the Charter, receive appropriate training/support to carry out their responsibilities
- Allocation of officer support to ensure the delivery of the above
- A mechanism to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the member development process

HAVING READ THIS DOCUMENT WHAT DOES SIGNING UP TO THE CHARTER COMMIT YOUR AUTHORITY TO?

In signing up to the charter your authority must commit to the following:

- Specify a date by which your authority will be ready to be assessed against the Charter, intermediate milestone, or primary milestone
- Share learning with other authorities in the West Midlands. This could be in the form of hosted learning events, documentation, focused exchange visits or peer support, etc.
- Put forward two elected member and two officers to be trained to take part in authority assessments. This will be a time commitment of at least 3 days for each assessment. It is envisaged that assessors will be required to undertake no more than one assessment per year.

Other bodies supporting Member Development

1. Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

This is a membership organisation to which Warwick District Council belongs. It provides the following benefits (taken from the LGIU website):

Policy Briefings:

Our expert staff keeps you abreast of everything that impacts on local government with concise briefings e-mailed to your desk-top

Help-line:

E-mail or phone our experts whenever you need help

Seminars and training:

Training courses and seminars that respond to your needs

BRIEFING Magazine:

With 10 editions a year this is the your first port of call for new ideas in local government

Networks:

A practical pool of knowledge, experience and support through a range of different forums and networks

Publications:

Analysis, tool-kits and practical guides to help you stay at the cutting edge

Members' website:

Access the full back catalogue of briefings and best practice

Projecting your excellence:

We can help you publicise your successes, good practice and achievement

Lobbying:

Join forces to get the message across and influence key decision makers through an LGIU campaign

Help set the agenda:

Shape the priorities and direction through our representative Management Committee

The LGIU also have a member development programme which includes courses, mentoring and study visits. It can be accessed from their website: www.lgiu.gov.uk

The annual subscription is £2650 which runs from January to January and requires six months notice. So the subscription for January 2004 to January 2005 has already been paid and the subscription for January 2005 to January 2006 will be paid out of this year's budget.

2. Warwick University Local Government Consortium

This is a membership organisation but by invitation rather subscription although there is a cost to membership. Warwick District Council was a member for a substantial period of time and has been invited to rejoin by the Director of the consortium.

The work of the consortium is carried out by research groups comprising elected members, officers and academics. The current initiatives the consortium is investigating are:

- Local Authorities and English Regional Government
- What's happening to Local Democracy?
- Local Government and the NHS – improving understanding
- Making Change and Improvement – how did we do it?

The annual subscription of £2000 is for a financial year (April to March) and can be terminated by giving 3 months notice.

3 The Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA)

This is a company wholly owned by the Local Government Association whose work focuses on four main areas:

- improving the quality of leadership
- strengthening corporate capacity
- improving service delivery in the areas of education, children's and adult social care services
- helping councils build sustainable communities

In relation to Member Development the IDEA runs both the Modern Members Programme and the Leadership Academy. These are open to individual members or, in the case of the modern members programme can be organized as in house events

Appendix 3

Member Development Budget

The current budget for member development in 2004/05 is £11,600 of which £2565 is already spent or committed, leaving a balance of £9035.

There have been requests for a speed reading course and media training from members as well as potential gaps identified in health and safety training for members.