

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Member Development Strategy 2006/07 11th January 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the draft Member Development Strategy produced as a result of informal discussions by Members of the Committee.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Member Development Strategy 2006/07 be approved as attached at Appendix A for adoption by the Council.

1.0 Introduction

3.1 At the last meeting of the Committee, Members were informed of the advice of the North West Employers Organisation of the requirement to produce a 'member-led' Strategy for Member Development as part of the progression towards achieving the Charter for Member Development.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 An informal meeting of the Business Committee was therefore held at Morecambe Town Hall on 29th November 2006.

2.2 A number of examples of successful Strategies from other Authorities were made available at the meeting and discussions were held 'workshop style' on what this Authority felt should be included in such a strategy.

2.3 Advice notes from NWEO state that the Strategy should set clear direction, identification of needs, resources to be made available, approaches to delivery, evaluation process, and success criteria and which can be shown to contribute to the local authority achieving its aims and objectives.

2.4 Bullet point notes were made at the meeting of the main issues raised and more detailed notes were also taken of the discussions, following which the draft Strategy has been prepared as attached at Appendix A.

2.5 Members are asked to consider the content of the Strategy and amend or approve this for adoption by the City Council.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 All Members were advised of the informal meeting and asked to contribute any ideas either through their representative on the Committee or through Members' Services.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 In order to achieve the NWEO Charter for Member Development it is necessary for the Council to adopt a Strategy which has been developed by Members. Responsibility for managing issues relating to elected Members including training and development is delegated to the Council Business Committee.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The cost of training courses and events is met from the Member training budget held by Legal and HR Services. A separate budget for attendance by Members at conferences is also held by Democratic Services. The intention in producing the Strategy is not to increase the spending on training and development but to achieve a better focus and value for money.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Guidance Notes for Local authorities working Towards Achieving the North West Charter on Elected Member Development

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LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

APPENDIX A

Member Development Strategy

2006/2007



1. The North West Charter for Member Development

The City Council is aiming for a formal inspection by the North West Employers' Organisation (NWEO), which will hopefully culminate with the awarding of the North West Charter for Member Development. The Charter is awarded to Councils who have shown a high level of commitment to elected member training and development that is supported by all political parties.

The Members of the Council Business Committee who have developed this strategy are:



Councillor Susan Bray Councillor Evelyn Archer Councillor Maggie Chadwick Councillor Anne Chapman



Councillor Geoff Knight Councillor Joyce Pritchard Councillor Peter Robinson

The Charter has a life span of two years after which the Council is subject to re-assessment and asked to submit details of how they have sustained and further developed their commitment to member development.

The City Council is also working towards the Investors in People Standard and sees its commitment to Member Development as an integral part of developing and enriching our human resources.

2. What is a Member Development Strategy?

Lancaster City Council is committed to continuous improvement, innovation and best value in all of the services it provides and aims to develop councillors and officers to their full potential in their roles.

Having a Member Development Strategy means that there is clear guidance for members on the development and support opportunities for the coming year.

The strategy aims to

- ❖ Ensure that all Members are fully supported in their learning and development so that they can provide the best service possible to their constituents and to the Council
- ❖ Address the areas that Members have identified as their main priorities for the coming year as a result of one to one interviews and agreed personal development plans
- ❖ Enable members to be learners rather than recipients of training
- ❖ Provide a full induction for Members setting out the role of a Councillor and identifying the importance of their role within the Council
- ❖ Give all members the opportunity to benefit from the advances of information technology
- ❖ Achieve external recognition of Lancaster City Council as a lead authority for member development.

Councillors need to take on board a range of new skills in a short space of time in order to embrace new complex roles adding a new range of skills to existing competencies. It is important for all Councillors, new and old, to embrace changes to working practices and regularly refresh their knowledge.

3. Commitment to Member Development

Lancaster City Council is committed to its approach to promoting City, Coast and Countryside and in order to achieve this ambition Lancaster City Council has committed itself to providing developmental support for its elected members throughout their term in office, but expects each Councillors to take a personal responsibility for their own learning and development with the support provided.

The City Council has committed itself to Member Development by the inclusion of the project in the terms of reference of the Council Business Committee and gaining the approval of full Council.

The City Council has already begun to demonstrate this commitment by:

- ❖ Creating a dedicated Members' page on the intranet
- ❖ Developing and distributing a Councillor newsletter
- ❖ Providing personal websites for Members
- ❖ Providing training alerts
- ❖ Providing a noticeboard for elected Members in the distribution room
- ❖ Providing library resources
- ❖ Holding Member development surgeries prior to meetings of full Council
- ❖ Information on how to become a Councillor
- ❖ Enrolling Councillors on the Lancashire Leaders' Programme

It is also hoped to further develop:

- ❖ Visits to other local authorities for information sharing
- ❖ Joint training events
- ❖ Mentoring and shadowing with both Members and officers of the Council
- ❖ A leaflet for prospective Councillors to outline the commitment required

4. Learning and Development Priorities

Priorities for Member development have been informed by a number of sources:

- ❖ Member Development one to one interviews
- ❖ Information from both newly elected and long serving Members
- ❖ Experiences and expertise of other local authorities
- ❖ The Council's Corporate Plan and Priorities
- ❖ The Charter for Member Development
- ❖ The IdeA and National Member Development programmes

The main development priorities that have been identified for 2006/2007 are:

- ❖ Time Management
- ❖ Managing Information
- ❖ Speed Reading
- ❖ Assertiveness
- ❖ Questioning techniques
- ❖ Chairing Skills
- ❖ IT Skills
- ❖ Lone Working

The City Council has also produced an Elected Member Training and Development Programme to run until May 2007. This provides Members with the opportunity to address their personal priorities. A copy of the full Training Programme is available on the Intranet under Elected Member Training.

5. Evaluation

The programme of Member Training will be produced annually but will be renewed on a six monthly basis and updated as and when training needs are identified.

Feedback will be sought from all Members attending both internally and externally sourced courses, which will provide information on their relevance and effectiveness.

The Council will also ask for a written report from Members who attend conference events on behalf of the Council to provide an opportunity to share information and knowledge.

The Council will also seek to undertake joint training with other authorities where possible to enable the Council to create a useful network for additional feedback.

One to one interviews will be held yearly with a six month review. The review will be undertaken in the most convenient way, either by telephone or at a time to suit Members. They will remain confidential but the information gained will be used to further enhance the member development programme.

6. Review

In addition to the review and updating of the Member Training Programme this Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that continues to reflect the corporate aims and objectives of the Authority.

7. Resources

Financial Support

The Budget allocation for Member Development for 2006/2007 is £10,500. The responsibility for this budget rests with Human Resources, however the day to day management of this budget is carried out by Members' Services.

The Council also has a budget for attendance at conferences which stands at £5,500 which is divided into four sections in order to ensure more widespread conference attendance by Group Leaders, Cabinet, Regulatory and Standing Committees and Overview and Scrutiny. The Budget is managed by Members Services and as well as attendance at annual conferences ad hoc requests are considered and approved based on the finances available and the benefit to the Council.

Information Technology

More and more information is transmitted and stored electronically and without the necessary IT skills Members of Lancaster City Council may find themselves at a significant disadvantage.

58 Councillors now have either a Council provided laptop or access to the Council's computer system via Netilla. Any Councillor wishing to use a PC in the Town Hall is welcome to use that in their Group Room or access can also be provided in Members' Services. One to one support is provided during normal office hours by Information Services and Democratic Services.

Members are encouraged to take advantage of the courses provided to either discover or enhance their IT capabilities.

Officer Support

All Members of the Council will receive support to enable them to be effective in their role as a Councillor. Members' Services can offer day to day support, and together with Democratic Support they are co-ordinating the Member Development process. The key officers to contact are:

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