

Subject: Member Learning and
Development Strategy

Status: For Publication

Report to: The Council

Date: 27th June 2007

Report of: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Portfolio

Holder: A Well Managed Council

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Council's support for the proposed Member Learning and Development Strategy and associated Action Plan to enable the delivery of effective learning and development to Councillors in 2007/08.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:-

A Well Managed Council:- Empowering elected Members to acquire and develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively undertake their role as a Councillor is fundamental to ensuring that the Council is able to deliver quality services to the public. Approval of an annual strategy based upon an evaluation of learning needs, is central to enabling priorities for development to be determined, a programme of training to be delivered and outcomes to be monitored.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendation in this report involves risk considerations as set out below:

- Failure to implement a Member Learning and Development Strategy for 2007/08 will undermine the good work undertaken so far, to build the capacity of elected members and may reduce the effectiveness of the Council's political governance arrangements.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Member Learning and Development Strategy provides a comprehensive, overarching approach and direction for the development and support of elected members over the forthcoming year. It will ensure that member development is central to the day to day working of the Council and underpins the move towards Rossendale Council as a learning organisation. The Strategy will provide Members with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the Council's corporate priorities for the benefit of local constituents. A copy of the proposed Strategy for 2007/08 is attached at Appendix A.

4.2 Some of the key priorities for 2007/08 are as follows:

- To implement the recommendations of the North West Charter for Member Development Assessment Report which includes:
 - Partnership working with other district authorities and the County Council;
 - Develop Member Mentors within the authority or with neighbouring authorities;
 - Achieve a balance between internal and external training, consider cost effectiveness, using local officers, generating new ideas, networking.
- To continue to strive for external recognition of Rossendale Borough Council as a leading authority for member development.
- To continue to support Members in fulfilling their leadership role in the community
- To implement the Community Leadership Action Plan
- Partnership working with Whitworth Town Council

4.3 The Strategy contains an Implementation Plan which outlines how each of the above objectives will be met. The Strategy also forms the basis of an Annual Learning and Development Schedule to be delivered both in-house and externally, comprising key development sessions for all Members. In addition, there is a Member Development Programme issued quarterly, which identifies a large range of courses, activities and materials, which Members will be able to access to ensure self-development.

4.9 The Member Development Working Group continues to oversee the production of the Strategy, Annual Learning and Development Schedule and Quarterly Development Programme and to monitor their effectiveness. The Working Group helps to ensure that the views of elected Members remain central to the process. The Member Development Working Group has been consulted about the proposal to update the existing Strategy.

4.10 Members will be please to note that the 2006/07 Strategy has led to some important successes within Member Development over the last year.

- The Council was successful in achieving the North West Charter for Member Development.
- The Council has been selected as a finalist for the Municipal Journal Councillor Development Achievement of the Year award.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 Funding for the Member Development Strategy has been earmarked within the Council's training budget for 2007/08.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 A clear Member Learning and Development Strategy will provide Elected Members with the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective community leaders and to deliver the Corporate Plan. The Council places importance on effective political and ethical governance arrangements.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 The Member Learning and Development Strategy is a key element of the Organisational Development Plan, and a driver in developing Rossendale into a learning organisation which will deliver quality services which meet the needs of local people.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Adoption of the Strategy will provide Members with an opportunity to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the Council's corporate improvement priorities for the benefit of local constituents.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 To adopt the Member Learning and Development Strategy for 2007/08 and associated Action Plan.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Individual interviews with elected Members were carried out as part of the Personal Development Planning process undertaken in 2006.

10.2 The Member Development Working Group considered the proposal to refresh the 2006/07 Strategy at its meeting on 11th June 2007.

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No background papers