

Subject: Member Training and
Development Strategy 2008/2009

Status: For Publication

Report to: The Cabinet

Date: 30th July 2008

Report of: Executive Director - Business

Portfolio

Holder: Finance and Resources

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To ask Members to agree the proposed Member Training and Development Strategy to enable the delivery of effective learning and development to Councillors in 2008/09.

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 recommendations in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Failure to implement a Member Training and Development Strategy for 2008/09 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. It may also mean that the Council loses North West Charter Status for Member Development.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Member Training and Development Strategy provides a comprehensive, overarching approach and direction for the development and support of elected members over the forthcoming year to help them deliver the Council's priorities. It will ensure that member development is central to the day to day working of the Council and strengthens the Council's approach to being a learning organisation. A copy of the proposed Strategy for 2008/09 is attached at Appendix A.

4.2 In 2006, the Council was awarded Charter Status in member development. This meant that Rossendale was recognised as having demonstrated commitment to, and achievement of excellence in, elected member development. To maintain the Charter standards, authorities need to be reviewed after 3 years to demonstrate that they are still committed to member development and still meet the six principles outlined in the charter. The Charter accreditation will fall for renewal in 2009 and the Council can re-apply between November 2008 and March 2009. It is important that the Strategy is set within the context of achieving level II, the exemplar standards as part of the review. This commitment has been expressed by the Member Development Working Group at its meeting on 27th May 2008 and Members are asked to confirm their commitment to striving towards achieving exemplar level II standards.

4.3 Some of the key priorities for 2008/09 are as follows:

- To achieve Level II of the Charter we need to:
 - Provide evidence that investment in Member development has had a "direct impact" on the work of the local authority
 - Provide evidence of excellence in Member Development
 - Show commitment to continuous improvement
- To continue to strive for external recognition of Rossendale Borough Council as a leading authority for member development.
- To look at innovative ways of delivering Member Development e.g. e-learning, promoting the Councillor Listening Series, learning toolkits etc.
- To develop mechanisms for sharing learning amongst members and officers through, for example, service open days where members can visit departments.
- For Members to have an understanding of the "Rossendale profile" in a local, regional and national context.
- Reviewing the role of Full Council to support members in their role as community leaders

- To be committed to looking at joint training opportunities with the County Council, Whitworth Town Council and other Authorities.
- To provide a quarterly Member Development Programme which identifies a large range of courses, activities and materials, which Members will be able to access to ensure self-development.

These priorities have been considered by the Member Development Working Group. There are also specific training priorities raised by Members through the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process and these are set out in Appendix B. These priorities form the basis of the Annual Training and Development Schedule set out in Appendix C.

The Member Development Working Group have also asked that criteria be developed to consider individual member training requests, for example, if a Member wishes to attend a conference. This is set out in Appendix D.

- 4.4 An implementation plan will be developed to outline how each of the priorities will be met. This will be monitored by the Member Development Working Group.
- 4.5 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.

STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 Funding for the Member Training and Development Strategy has been earmarked within the Council's training budget for 2008/09.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 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 Council's priorities. The Council places importance on effective political and ethical governance arrangements.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 The Member Training and Development Strategy is a key element of the Organisational Development Plan, and supports Rossendale as 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 priorities for the benefit of the Borough.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Member Training and Development Strategy for 2008/09, which was agreed by Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8th July, be approved.
- 9.2. That Members confirm their commitment to striving to achieve Level II of the North West Charter for Member Development when reviewed in 2009.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Portfolio Holder, Member Development Working Group, Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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No background papers