



<p>TITLE: MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>TO/ON: CABINET - 9th NOVEMBER 2005</p> <p>BY: HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</p> <p>LEAD MEMBER: JANET GRAHAM, HUMAN RESOURCES AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>STATUS: FOR PUBLICATION</p>
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To seek approval to the Member Development Strategy 2005/06 and to outline the reasons for the production of the Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To note the reasons for the production of a Member Development Strategy; and
- 2.2. To approve the revised terms of reference of the Member Development Working Group.
- 2.3. To recommend to the Council to adopt a Member Development Strategy for 2005/06 and associated Member Development Action Plan 2005/06.

3. REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 In 2002 the Audit Commission's Corporate Governance report identified weaknesses in the Council's corporate governance arrangements and highlighted that the Council did not provide adequate development opportunities for elected Members. Particular areas of concern included poor political leadership, a lack of understanding and clarity of roles, an absence of development and training, insufficient knowledge and skills for Members to take informed decisions; and a lack of basic induction training. Members will be aware that the Audit Commission's findings were accepted by the Council and are now being addressed in the Improvement Plan which is monitored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

- 3.2. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) carried out by the Audit Commission in 2003, whilst acknowledging some improvements, also highlighted on-going concerns in respect of the lack of a Member Development Framework; the poor knowledge base of elected Members; a lack of opportunities to share information; limited confidence; a lack of briefing on key issues; and patchy involvement in the management of performance. In response to that report the Council introduced, in 2003, a Member Induction Programme and a Member Training Programme. The training programme continues to be delivered jointly by both in-house providers and the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA).
- 3.3. The Audit Commission's Progress Assessment Report of December 2004 noted the improvements which had been made with regard to councillors' involvement in difficult decision making, member development and performance management. However, there was an acknowledgment that this was not fully embedded or yet having an impact on delivery or outcomes. Accordingly, in January 2005, the Council adopted Member Development and New Political Arrangements as its second corporate priority for 2005/06.
- 3.4. The I&DeA published its report in March 2005 following a review of Member Development and Political Arrangements. The report considered the progress made so far and the proposed priorities for the future. The recommended priorities for 2005/06 were as follows:-
 - 3.4.1. Formalisation of the new political and governance arrangements
 - 3.4.2. Development of front line Members
 - 3.4.3. Community leadership
 - 3.4.4. Member/Officer relations.
- 3.5. A training proposal developed by the I&DeA in April 2005 has been agreed and provides the following strands of support:-
 - 3.5.1. Support to the development of new political governance arrangements
 - 3.5.2. Promoting a strategic approach to Member development
 - 3.5.3. Peer support and Members mentoring
 - 3.5.4. Development of Member/officer relationships and working.
- 3.6. The purpose of the Member Development Strategy is to provide a clear guidance 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 improvement priorities for the benefit of local constituents. A copy of the proposed Strategy is attached at Appendix A.

- 3.7. The five key objectives of the Strategy, which have been identified in the light of the evidence contained in the above reports, are as follows:-
 - 3.7.1 The provision of a comprehensive Member Development Strategy and Development Programme which balances group and individual needs with Council priorities;
 - 3.7.2. Ensuring that all newly elected Members are properly inducted into the Council and their role;
 - 3.7.3. Ensuring that all Members are connected to the Council's IT system;
 - 3.7.4. Undertaking annual personal development plans for Members based upon individual need and preferred learning style to assist them in their development;
 - 3.7.5. Improving the external recognition of Rossendale Borough Council as a lead authority for Member development.
- 3.8. The Strategy contains an Action Plan, which outlines how each of the above priorities will be met. It is also intended that the Strategy will form the basis of a Member Development Programme issued quarterly, which will identify a range of facilities, activities and materials, which Members will be able to access to ensure self-development. The Strategy itself will be revised annually.
- 3.9. The production of this Strategy represents an important milestone in the Council's recovery programme, as Members take responsibility for and control of their own development needs, rather than simply responding to external advice. Members can be justifiably proud of this achievement. The Authority will continue to work closely with the I&DeA in delivering Member development for the future. However, the adoption of this Strategy allows greater flexibility for Members to choose the areas of learning which are important to them.
- 3.10. A Member Development Working Group (MDWG) has been established to oversee the production of the Strategy and Development Programme and to monitor their effectiveness. The Working Group will help to ensure that the views of elected Members remain central to the process. The Working Group specifically comprises cross party representation, with a mixture of gender, Portfolio Holder/Front-Line Members and differing lengths of service. The Working Group met for the first time on 20th July 2005 and agreed its terms of reference, together with the draft Strategy. Subsequently, a proposal has been developed to expand the scope of the MDWG to include overseeing the provision of Members' Services. A copy of the revised terms of reference of the Working Group is attached at Appendix B.
- 3.11. Throughout the period July/August 2005 Members were invited to complete Personal Development Plans (PDPs). This process involved a structured interview with a member of staff from Legal and Democratic Services or the

I&DeA to assess each councillor's achievements to date, plans for the future, any training undertaken, appointments held, key skills sets, future development needs and preferred learning styles. Some 31 elected members participated in the PDP exercise, which represents an impressive 86% take up. The results have been collated by I&DeA colleagues and their report is attached at Appendix C. The PDPs have helped to identify broad Member development needs and it is envisaged that they will also inform the Development Programme. The annual PDP process will also provide a useful source of information when the Strategy is revised each year.

- 3.12. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 8th August 2005, considered a report on the draft Strategy and the establishment of the MDWG and agreed to recommend the Cabinet to adopt the Member Development Strategy for 2005/06 and the associated Member Development Action Plan 2005/06.
- 3.13. The Improvement Board, at its meeting on 22nd August 2005, considered progress in relation to Member development and were provided with a copy of the draft Strategy. The Board reiterated the importance of Member development in relation to CPA. They also made some suggestions in relation to identifying timescales within the Action Plan, incorporating the work of the East Lancashire Leadership Programme into the Strategy and ensuring that training was delivered.
- 3.14. It is intended to work towards accreditation through the North West Charter for Member Development. The award, issued by the North West Employers Organisation, recognises achievement in the area of Member Development.
- 3.15. A further meeting of the MDWG is scheduled to be held on 2nd November 2005 to consider the recommendations of the I&DeA report and the latest draft of the Strategy. Any comments received will be reported orally at the meeting on 9th November 2005.
- 3.16. The Cabinet is requested to note the report, to approve the revised terms of reference of the MDWG and to recommend Council to adopt the Strategy for 2005/06 and associated Member Development Action Plan 2005/06.

4. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

4.1. FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1.1. Not applicable

4.2. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.2.1. Production of a Member Development Strategy is central to the delivery of this corporate priority. Specific elements of training within the Development Programme will also assist in the smooth implementation of the new political management arrangements.

4.3. HUMAN RESOURCES

4.3.1. Development of Elected Members can be seen in parallel with the overall development of the Council's Human Resources and the change in culture to that of a learning organisation. It is envisaged that member development will help to increase the capacity of elected members to deliver improvements in Council services.

5. ANY OTHER RELEVANT CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1. Not applicable

6. RISK

6.1. None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT

7.1. None

8. EQUALITIES ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT

8.1. None

9. WARDS AFFECTED

9.1. Not applicable

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1. Member Development Working Group

Background documents:

I&DeA Report – Member Development and Political Arrangements: Progress to Date and Next Steps – March 2005

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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