

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the Member Development Strategy for approval.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That the Member Development Strategy at Appendix A be approved by Cabinet.**

**3.0 SUMMARY**

- 3.1 The Member Development Strategy has been developed by the cross party Member Development Steering Committee based upon the standards set out in the West Midlands Member Development Charter to provide a consistent framework within which learning and development opportunities can be planned, delivered, monitored and evaluated.
- 3.2 The strategy clearly outlines the Council's commitment to Member Development and the links with the Council Plan and Community Priorities.
- 3.3 There are numerous key outcomes for elected Members, the Council and the Community which will result from implementing the strategy. It will provide a 'route map' to support all Members in accessing learning and development at an appropriate level delivered through a range of methods. This will ensure that all Members have the relevant skills to carry out the role, are well informed, effective and strong community leaders with an understanding of the needs of local people and the ability to achieve the Council's vision and make an acknowledged difference within the Borough.
- 3.4 The implementation of this strategy will be integral to the achievement of the West Midlands Member Development Charter during 2009/10.

**4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Not Applicable

## **5.0. BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 Any local authority dedicated to meeting the needs of its community must be committed to developing its elected members. The evolving central government reform agenda has placed increasing emphasis on an authority's need to rethink their approach to member support and development. The impact is such that a majority of local authorities across the West Midlands now have some form of support programme in place – however the approach, levels of commitment, effectiveness and progress varies considerably.
- 5.2 The West Midlands Member Development Charter sets out a standard to ensure a comprehensive approach to elected member development, which directly contributes and impacts on the performance improvement of a local authority.
- 5.3 An effective Member Development Strategy should seek to address the four key stages identified within the Charter
- Stage 1 – Planning & policy: The local authority plans and invests in member development to support its continuous improvement
  - Stage 2 – Implementation & delivery: The local authority's delivery of effective and timely training and development interventions
  - Stage 3 – Monitoring & review: The local authority monitors and reviews the ongoing effectiveness of its member development activity
  - Stage 4 – Evaluation: A mechanism that has been deployed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the member development programme
- 5.4 By implementing a robust and comprehensive member led development strategy, the Council will be well placed to equip all Members with the essential skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively whilst ensuring this provides value for money and improves the performance of the Council. In addition, this provides a framework within which the Council can progress towards assessment under the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

## **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The scope of the strategy will ensure all Members have equal access to learning and development opportunities that support a diverse and representative membership.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 It is good practice to have a structured member development programme in place but there is no legal requirement to have one

## **9.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 9.1 Access to development opportunities will enable Members to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities and improve the performance of the Council.

## **10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The budget currently allocated for Member learning and development is £30,000 for 2009/10. A proportion of this budget is to be set aside for individual development needs which includes an annual £250 personal training allowance for each Member, any allowances not used will be returned to the corporate budget. The remainder of the budget is to be used for supporting generic learning and development and for mandatory training.

There is currently a Member Development reserve which has a balance of £104,000 however there are commitments during this financial year of approximately £75,000 for Equality and Diversity training, Leadership Academy, Code of Conduct and the introduction of the Personal Development Planning Scheme, this would leave £29,000 to be rolled forward in to future years.

- 10.2 The full costs of the Member Development Strategy will be funded from within the allocated budget provision.

## **11.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Borough Wide Implications

## **12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

West Midlands Member Development Charter

### **End of Report**

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