

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

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Summary

This report informs the Standards Committee about the progress achieved by the Member Development Working and the Member development activities which have taken place since January 2010 at Shropshire Council.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

REPORT

Background

1. Shropshire Council has made a commitment to work towards the West Midlands Region Member Development Primary Charter award. The work is led by the Member Development Working Group, the primary stage of the standard requires the core Member Development processes, such as individual development interviews and member development activities to be in place. There also needs to be evidence that review and evaluation is taking place.
2. The funding awarded by the West Midlands Regional Partnership in 2008 continues to be used for all Shropshire Council Member development and the initial work involved in the preparation of the application for the Primary Member Development Charter award. Although, it is anticipated, that the new round of Member Development will be funded from the Member Development budget provision.

West Midlands Leaders Board Primary Level Member Development Charter Award

3. The assessment visit for the Primary Level Member Development Charter award will take place on 1st September 2010. A team of four external Assessors will be at Shirehall to conduct interviews with Members and Officers of Shropshire Council to assess the quality of the Member Development Programme.

4. A portfolio of documents providing evidence of the Council's commitment to Member Development and the activities which support this commitment will be submitted for consideration to the West Midlands Leaders Board by 16th July 2010.
5. It is expected that feedback from the Assessors will be received in October with an indication of whether the Council has been successful in its application for Primary Charter Status.

Member 1:1 development reviews

6. Councillors Parsons, Shineton, West, Dee, Jones and Mellings have received training to conduct the Member Development Interviews. A flyer inviting Members to participate has been sent to all Members and information on the scheme was made available before Council on the 25th February 2010.
7. Fifteen interviews have been completed and a further eleven Members have registered their interest in participating in the scheme.
8. Information gathered as a result of these reviews will be used to create a relevant programme of development. This will ensure that the training programme is Member led and relevant to the identified needs of Members.
9. The West Midlands Leaders' Board have indicated that a minimum participation rate of 50% of Members undertaking the Development Review would be expected to achieve the Primary Level Member Development Charter. Steps are being taken by members of the Working Group to ensure that this level is met.

Member Development Programme

10. The Member Development programme has continued in a 6 month rolling programme format. The purpose of the programme is to provide Members with the relevant knowledge and information to allow them to be effective in their role.
11. During the Induction Programme the following five sessions were identified as essential for Members to attend,
 - Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding
 - Corporate parenting
 - Equity and Diversity
 - Planning/Licensing training for Members who sit on Regulatory Committees.
12. All seventy-four Members were invited to attend the first four essential sessions, either through the Member Induction Programme, or additional sessions that have been arranged through the Member Development Programme. Twenty Members were invited to licensing training and sixty-three were invited to planning training.

13. Attendance at these sessions during the Induction Programme was poor and further sessions were arranged for Members through the rolling Member Development Programme. A breakdown of the number of Members who have attended the essential topics is given below:

Course Title	Total number of Members attended	Percentage of total number of Members
Code of Conduct	74	100%
Safeguarding	39	52%
Corporate Parenting	36	48%
Equalities and Diversity	24	32%
Licensing	8	40%
Planning	49	77%

14. Further sessions have been arranged. Individual Members are being contacted to arrange either one to one sessions or to be invited to future development events.
15. Officers have been working with Members to develop alternative methods of course delivery at times that enables Members to attend.
16. In addition to the identified Essential session the Member Development Programme has provided bespoke development sessions (post-induction).
17. Additional sessions have been delivered for Members since January 2010 these include;
- Speed Reading (21st January 2010)
 - Giving Bad News (25th January 2010),
 - Public Speaking (17th February 2010),
 - Time Management (3rd March 2010)
 - Information and Records Management (16th March 2010)
 - Resources Session (22nd March 2010)
 - Gypsies and Travellers on your Patch (21st April 2010)
18. Satisfaction ratings by those attending these sessions were high, with an average satisfaction rating of 90%. The 'Giving Bad News' session attracted only four participants, the 'Gypsies and Travellers' session was the best supported with sixteen participants.
19. A coffee morning for new Members was held on the 17th December 2009. Both Members and Officers described this session as useful. The Members present requested that refresher sessions on key subjects be held during the next municipal year. They commented on how useful they had found the Equalities and Diversity and the Corporate Parenting training.
20. Business Consultant, Peter Starbuck, was engaged to deliver a breakfast workshop to members of the Standards Committee, members of the Member Development Group and Corporate Management Team (CMT) Officers on Thursday 31st March 2010. The subject of the workshop was 'An Overview on Management – for Shropshire Council, To Consider Corporate

Responsibilities'. Peter has written extensively on management topics internationally and on this topic specifically.

Feedback, evaluation and impact

21. Feedback from Member development activities has been largely positive, for example, average satisfaction is 89% from the Member Induction Programme. Future development activities will continue to be evaluated and reviewed through individual evaluation sheets and feedback from the Member Development Working Group, whose members will act as Champions.
22. Average satisfaction for the Member Development sessions delivered between July and November 2009 was 93%, and 90% for sessions delivered between January and April 2010.
23. An average of 8 Members attended each session delivered between July and November 2009, with an average of 9 Members per session attending sessions between January and April 2010. The Member Development Working Group has been considering changing the methods of delivery and timings of the sessions to increase Member participation.
24. Satisfaction is assessed through evaluation forms completed on the day. The real test of whether the learning has been worthwhile is by looking at the impact the learning has had on an individual's role. Analysis of the effectiveness and impact of the Member Development Programme will be performed on an ongoing basis by conducting random surveys and focus groups.

Protocol for attending conferences

25. A protocol for Members to attend conferences is now in place, Councillor Phillips attended an Equality and Diversity conference in March and has reported back on the outcomes of the session. This features on the Councillors' Corner of the website.

Conclusion

26. Feedback from all member development activities since June 2009 has been largely positive.
27. The Member Development Working Group propose to meet every quarter to monitor the evaluation and impact of Member development and act as champions to promote learning and development amongst Members. This Working Group will report to the Standards Committee.