

## WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**CABINET MEETING**  
**24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2005**

### Member Development Charter

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME</b>	Greater Learning & Participation
<b>CORPORATE PLAN THEMES:</b>	Providing Community Leadership
<b>KEY PRIORITY:</b>	Local Democracy
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor John-Paul Campion
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Paul Ryder, Head of Human Resources
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Elaine Rogers, Principal Personnel Officer Ext.no.2773 elaine.rogers@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES</b>	'Making Your Commitment'

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet on the proposed Member Development Charter.
- 1.2 To improve the performance of Wyre Forest District Council through the development of elected members.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

**2.1 Wyre Forest District Council agrees to sign up to the West Midlands Development Charter - Primary Milestone as detailed in the report.**

**2.2 To agree to the financial implications.**

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Over recent years, member development and training has developed alongside the continuing change in local government. The Human Resources Strategy/Business Plan recognises that members must be supported and assisted in playing their vital role in modernising local government. Business objectives centred on Member training have been achieved and all obligatory and essential training met.
- 3.2 Following induction and then on an annual basis, members are sent a short questionnaire requesting their personal training requirements. Training is identified as regulatory, essential and desirable depending on the status of

each individual member. Members must attend regulatory training eg. planning, depending on their role within the Council.

- 3.3 Currently Heads of Service arrange their own appropriate training for members e.g. Induction, Overview and Scrutiny, Planning, Licensing, Budget/Finance etc.
- 3.4 Information Technology is arranged independently from IEG funding and is supported by the HR Division.
- 3.5 The Authority actively encourages Members to attend courses organised for Officers if they feel it may be of benefit to them.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 What is the Member Development Charter?

*The purpose of the Charter is to improve the performance of local authorities through the development of elected members.*

- 4.2 Why do we need it?

Any local authority dedicated to meeting the needs of its community must be committed to the development of its elected members. The evolving modernisation agenda has placed increasing emphasis on an authority's need to rethink their approach to member support and development.

- 4.3 The West Midlands Charter has a number of objectives :

- To ensure local authorities deliver quality leadership and services to their public
- To raise the level of performance of those responsible for the political management and direction of the local authority
- To raise the profile and encourage commitment to elected member development
- To raise the standard of elected member development and support across the region
- To recognise those local authorities who have demonstrated their commitment and achievement

- 4.4 How does it work?

There are five key stages in working towards the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

##### Stage 1 – signing up to the Charter

Local authorities that want to participate are required to sign up to the charter to demonstrate their commitment to improving performance, through the development of their elected members. At the point of signing up, a local

authority must specify a date by which they will have achieved the Charter or key milestone within it. (See Appendix A).

The form will need to be signed by the Chief Executive and Leaders of all political parties.

#### Stage 2 – Improving the development of elected members

A local authority will work towards achieving the Charter or Key Milestone within it.

#### Stage 3 – Assessment

When a local authority considers it has everything in place to demonstrate it has achieved the Charter or Key Milestones within the Charter, an on-site assessment will be carried out by a small-trained team of elected members and officers. The Member Development Charter comprises three levels: *Primary Milestone, Intermediate Milestone and Charter Award.*

#### Stage 4 – Awarding the Charter

When an authority has been assessed and achieved the Charter, or key milestones within the Charter, they will receive their award at an annual celebration event.

#### Stage 5 – Re-assessment

Once awarded, the Charter has a life span of two years, after which a local authority will be required to submit details of how it has sustained the standard. A trained team of elected members and officers undertaking a desktop review will judge this.

### 4.5 Primary Milestone

To achieve the Primary Milestone Award a local authority must have in place:

- a) A corporate annual plan developed in consultation with members that outlines the priority development needs, how they link to achieving the corporate objectives of the local authority; how they will be met and when.
- b) Allocation of financial resources to deliver the development needs as detailed in the annual plan.
- c) An agreed approach that offers members an annual development review
- d) An induction process that includes:
- e) A standardised induction for all members

- f) An introduction to the West Midlands Member Development Charter
- g) A review for new members after 6 months, which includes an evaluation
- h) of the induction process
- i) An approach to member development that seeks to attract a diversity of elected members and supports their specific development needs.
- j) A process to ensure officers and members involved in supporting the implementation of the Charter, receive appropriate training/support to carry out their responsibilities.
- k) A mechanism to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the member development process.
- l) Allocation of officer support to ensure the delivery of all these aspects of member development.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The primary milestone can be achieved within the existing annual budget allocation of £15,000.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal and policy implications.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues in connection with this report.

**8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Further to a review of Member development and training it is believed that the system must be regularly reviewed and updated in line with the continuing changing role of the local councillor. To commit to the Member Development Charter would be a major step towards achieving this important goal.

**9. CONSULTEES**

- 9.1 WMLGA  
Cllr John-Paul Campion

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 West Midlands Member Development Charter Self Assessment  
Primary, Intermediate and Full Charter

November, 2005