

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 MAY 2006

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2006-2007

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present the Member Development Strategy for 2006/2007 to the Standards Committee.

BACKGROUND

2. In 2001 the Council signed up to the I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) Charter for Member Development. More recently I&DeA, in association with NEREO (North East Regional Employers Organisation) has re-launched the Member Development Charter to include externally assessed standards that must be achieved in order to gain Charter Status. Middlesbrough Council is seeking Charter Status in respect of Member Development.
3. During 2004/2005 an informal Member Development Working Group was established in order to oversee matters relating to Member development. This was established as a Member/Officer working group, and has continued to meet regularly over the last two years.
4. Since May 2005 the Chair of the Council has also been given the overall responsibility for Member Development. Consequently, the Chair of the Council now chairs the Member Development Working Group. The Working Group has recently been advised that it needs to be constituted on a more formal basis as part of the continual improvement that is required to gain charter status.
5. On 19 April 2006 the Council's Corporate Affairs Committee (which has delegated powers of full Council) agreed formal terms of reference in respect of the Member Development Working Group. Under the terms of reference agreed by Corporate Affairs Committee, the Working Group will in future report to the Standards Committee.

6. One of the main responsibilities of the Member Development Working Group is the production of an annual Member Development Strategy. The strategy for the forthcoming year, 2006/2007, is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
7. The strategy document is made up of a number of key elements as follows:
 - The Member Development Policy Statement
 - Member Development Strategy
 - Member Development Programme
 -Each of these is dealt with briefly in the following paragraphs:
8. The Member Development Policy Statement (page 2) is a high level document which sets out the Council's main policy commitments in respect of Member development.
9. The Member Development Strategy (pages 3 – 8) sets out in more detail the Council's aims and objectives relating to Member development, along with the key responsibilities of the Council towards its Members, and the main responsibilities expected of Members in respect of the Member Development Policy.
10. The Member Development Programme (pages 10 – 14) sets out the main learning and development opportunities available to Members throughout the year. It also links each of the training and development events to one or more of the key strategic themes of the Authority.
11. The content of the Member Development Programme is based on a number of factors such as
 - training and development needs of individual Members as identified through their personal development plans;
 - forthcoming changes to legislation;
 - structural changes within the Council;
 - best practice developments and new or innovative service delivery practices.

The Member Development Programme is amended on an ongoing basis throughout the year to reflect changes in legislation and practice as they occur.

CONCLUSIONS

12. The Standards Committee has the responsibility for ensuring high levels of ethics and probity within the operation of the Council. An effective Member development programme can assist in ensuring that elected Members have the skills and knowledge that are necessary to fully and properly undertake their role within the Council. The Standards Committee, with its independent Chair and independent members, is ideally placed to oversee the work of the Member Development Working Group, and to ensure a comprehensive approach to Member Development within the Council.
13. The attached strategy will be presented to a meeting of the full Council on May 17 for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. That the Member Development Strategy attached at Appendix 1 is agreed by the Committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of Corporate Affairs Committee, 19 April 2006