

Report of: Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Standards	12 October	8	All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: London Member Development Charter

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 In July 2005, London Councils Leaders' Committee agreed that a London Member Development Charter (LMDC) should be supported and be available to London councils. The Committee continues to encourage all London Councils to sign up to achieving the Charter.
- 1.2 The Leaders of both political groups on the Council and the Chief Executive support the proposal to achieve the Charter.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To support the proposal that the Council makes a commitment to the London Member Development Charter (LMDC).
- 2.2 To adopt the draft policy document attached at Appendix A.

3. Background

- 3.1 The London Member Development Charter aims to promote Member development so that councils can be better served and to recognise achievement in this area. It requires all party commitment and to be member led.
- 3.2 The Charter sets out five principles designed to help councils build their elected member capacity. These are that there is:
 - a commitment to member development;
 - a strategic approach to member development;

- a member learning and development plan in place;
 - evidence that learning and development is effective in delivering capacity; and
 - evidence that elected member development promotes work life balance and citizenship.
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- 3.3 Councils are invited to make a commitment to work towards achievement of Charter status which is awarded when the council in question submits itself to external assessment and demonstrates that it meet the principles.
- 3.4 Charter status lasts for three years, at which stage a further assessment is made.
- 3.5 The LMDC is influenced by, and is similar in format to the Investors in People (IiP) standard. The Council was externally reassessed in April 2010 and its IiP status was confirmed. The IiP standard focuses on staff. The LMDC is aimed at Councillors.
- 3.6 Fourteen other London boroughs have the Charter and a number of others are in the process of achieving it at the moment.
- 3.7 The role of Councillor is becoming more demanding and complex. Expecting Councillors just to 'get on with it' is not acceptable or tenable. Member development makes an important contribution to ensuring the overall effectiveness of the Council and its contribution to local democracy. Existing Councillors need to know what training and support they can expect and prospective candidates need to know that they will be given appropriate training to help them carry out their new role, if elected.
- 3.8 Islington Council has a good record of supporting training and most Councillors take advantage of training or development opportunities. The LMDC would provide a framework for formalising and extending existing good practice and would help focus resources on where they are most needed and would benefit both Members and the Council.
- 3.9 The first stage of working towards the Charter would be to make a formal declaration of commitment. Following this, an action plan would be developed outlining what needs to be done to meet the principles of the Charter. The Head of Democratic Services will work closely with the Whips and Leaders on work involved in achieving the Charter.
- 3.10 When the Council believes it is ready, it asks for an external review by a member and officer peer. Charter status is awarded if the principles are met. Reassessment takes place within three years. Assessment is undertaken by an officer from London Councils, a councillor who is a peer mentor and an officer from an authority which already has the Charter. Assessment lasts one day and as well as looking at documentation, the assessors normally speak to a member of the Standards Committee, both Leaders and Whips, a number of backbenchers, the Head of Democratic Services and an officer from the group offices.
- 3.11 A draft policy has been drawn up and is attached at Appendix A for consideration.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications:

There is a cost of £1,150 when the Council commits to the London Member Development Charter. This includes payment of fees to the Members involved as assessors. The cost will be met from within existing budgets.

4.2 **Legal Implications:**
There are no legal implications.

4.3 **Environmental Implications:**
There are no environmental implications.

4.4 **Equality Impact Assessment:**

The Charter seeks to confirm that the Council's policy on member training and development ensures that all members are given equal access to training and development and that councillors' individual development needs are met to enable them to carry out their duties as local councillors effectively.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to support the proposal to make a commitment to the LMDC in order to provide members with a structured approach to training, to ensure that they each receive the correct level of tailored support.

Appendices

Background papers: (available online or on request)

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Received by: Corporate Director of Resources Date

Head of Democratic Services Date

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