

## **2. EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER (A111/RMM)**

### **Proposal**

1 This report asks Members to consider signing up to the East Midlands Member Development Charter.

### **3 RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **That**

- 1. Members decide whether they wish to sign up to the East Midlands Member Development Charter.**
- 2. If Members do wish to sign up to the Charter, that a Member be appointed as a Member Representative for Member Learning and Development as described at Annex 2, with a review in October 2008 as part of the annual review of all Member Representative roles**
- 3. The Member Representative role be an approved duty for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances.**

### **Policy/Legal Background**

3 In October 2007 the Authority approved (Min Ref:95/07) as part of a report on a review of Member training and development that further consideration, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, be given to the Authority signing up to the Member Development Charter through Local Government East Midlands.

4 The job description for Members of National Park Authorities includes as a key function:

- attend appropriate training courses, briefing sessions and events arranged or sponsored by the Authority and the Association of National Park Authorities

5 In October 2007 Members approved a revised objective for Member training and development of:

- To enable Members to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours to improve effectiveness and fulfil their role as a Member of the Authority and that processes are in place to support this within a framework of good governance and continuous improvement

### **Key Issues**

6 Details of the East Midlands Member Development Charter and Standards are given at Annex 1.

7 In December 2007 the Director of Corporate Resources and Democratic Services Officer met with a representative from East Midlands to discuss the implications of signing up to the Charter. There were some key messages from this meeting including:

- a) There would be lots of support and enthusiasm from LGEM (Local Government East Midlands) and we would have access to free/subsidised support on:
  - Introducing Member Personal Development Plans

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- A diagnostic check against the Charter and developing a subsequent action plan
  - Access to an electronic political skills audit tool
- b) Although by signing up we are signaling that we intend to achieve the Charter our work can be paced
- c) There needs to be clear Member desire to sign up and it must not be just officer led
- 8 The Director of Corporate Resources has identified the following advantages and disadvantages of signing up to the Charter:
- a) Advantages –
- The introduction of Member Personal Development Plans is a key way of trying to ensure training delivered is targeted to individual needs and roles and takes account of other experiences. Although we have agreed in principle to introducing these it will be difficult within existing resources to achieve this quickly. The external help from East Midlands would allow us to put plans in place for all members in 2008 whilst also training staff to complete Plans for new members in future years.
  - Similarly the external help with producing an action plan will be an extra resource to make this happen
  - Achieving the Charter is externally assessed so it is a powerful piece of externally validated evidence that Members are supported and that a limited resource is used in the most effective way
  - The charter provides a framework and standards to achieve our actions/objectives and what we already do and plan to do will count towards achieving the Charter.
  - Achieving the Charter will require us to address some areas of development not previously addressed through our annual programme
  - We can plan achieving the Charter over a two year period
  - Introducing Member Personal Development Plans puts us in a better place if a more formal appraisal process is introduced by Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
  - There may be the possibility of some partnership working on introducing Member Personal Development Plans.
- b) Disadvantages include:
- The concern that some Members have expressed that this will be more time consuming for those members who are already very engaged in the Authority's work
  - The concern that some Members have expressed that this will still not engage those members who are more reticent to develop their knowledge and skills for various reasons
  - The extra pressure caused by publicly committing to achieving an external

standard

- 9 In response to the disadvantages above the LGEM contact has advised:
- There will be peaks and troughs in terms of time commitment but pursuing the Charter adds a focus that could avoid wasting time.
  - Pursuing the Charter does raise the profile of member development and has proven to engage members who may not have been engaged previously.
- 10 If Members decide to sign up to the Charter it is recommended that a Member Representative on Member Learning and Development is appointed. A template for this proposal is given at Annex 2.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Background**

- 1 In October 2007 the Authority approved a document titled 'Review of Member Training and Development October 2007' which contained proposals to improve further our approach to Member training and development. Key issues in this document included:
- a) Introduction of Member Personal Development Plans using a skills matrix as a basis for development of them
  - b) Compulsory planning training for all Members and no voting for Planning Committee Members until training received (to be introduced when appropriate training is in place)
  - c) Development of principles for content, delivery and timing of the annual programme
  - d) An annual evaluation of training and development activities and events to ensure that they are meeting the needs and priorities of the Authority and to ensure that delivery is cost effective and offers best value
  - e) An emphasis for all Members on individual responsibility for training and development in addition to support from the Authority
  - f) A proposal to monitor and report on attendance at the agreed pre-planned corporate training events

### **Resources**

- 2 It is proposed to identify a sum of £7,000 to support initial work on pursuing the Charter in particular for help with the development of Member Personal Development Plans if Members decide to sign up to the Charter. This would be found as follows:  
£2,500 from the existing Member Development budget  
£2,500 remaining from the capacity fund project  
£2,000 from the corporate overhead budget

### **Risk Management**

- 3 The main risk is failure to enable Members to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours to improve effectiveness and fulfil their role. The Authority has provided training for Members for many years and the proposals already agreed in October are part of continuous improvement in our approach. Signing up to the East Midlands Member Development Charter would provide an extra resource, external scrutiny, networking and partnership working opportunities and eventually accreditation of our work in this area.

### **Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety**

- 4 There are no issues to highlight. All Members have access to training and development opportunities.

### **Consultees**

- 5 The Management Team, Democratic Services staff and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority have been consulted on this report following discussions at the Strategic Advisory Group.

**Enclosures**

- 6 Annex 1: Details of the East Midlands Member Development Charter and Standards  
Annex 2: Member Representative template for Member Learning and Development role

**List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

- 7 Nil

**Report Author**

- 8 Ruth Marchington

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18 March 2008