

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Members' Training & Development Panel
2.	Date:-	10th June 2013
3.	Title:-	Charter for Member Development
4.	Directorate:-	Resources

5. Summary

The Council re-achieved the Charter for Member Development in February 2011 and will be due for re-assessment in February 2014. Changes at Local Government Yorkshire & Humber mean that any future assessments will be managed by North East Employers. This report considers whether further accreditation would be beneficial.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

6.1 Consider the benefits of formally seeking Charter status for Member Development.

7. Proposals and Details

The Charter for Member Development was first developed in 2004 as a model by which regional local government bodies and Councils could assess their management and support for Member development. The Council has been assessed against the standard twice, with the last assessment being in February 2011. The Council is due for re-assessment in February 2014. Previous assessments have been managed by Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (LGYH). Revised working arrangements at LGYH mean that they will no longer be able to offer re-assessment and any re-assessments would be carried out by North East Employers.

7.1. Assessment Model

Previous assessments have been heavily based around collation of paper-based evidence, with an additional day on site, supplemented by telephone interviews, as necessary. Review panels have consisted of officers from LGYH, supported by an Elected Member from another Council within the region.

The last assessment resulted in a small number of development recommendations, all of which have been considered by the Member Development Panel and implemented, as appropriate.

Given the changing nature of Councils and the work of Councillors, member development officers within the region have been keen to see the Charter approach change, both to reflect the new demands of Elected Members, but also to reduce the emphasis on production of documentation, and to focus more on outcomes, results and Elected Member perception.

The South Yorkshire network of member development officers has sought clarity from North East Employers as to their approach, although the response received so far indicates that the assessment would operate much as before.

7.2 Cost/Benefit analysis

The cost for the assessment would be £1,500. Additional to this would be the time commitment of officers in collating portfolios of information to provide to assessors, together with Members time in interviews.

The Charter framework is available for reference and could be used as a self-assessment tool, without external accreditation. This self-assessment approach is the model the Council has taken with respect to the Equalities Framework and customer service.

Similarly, the Council uses an internal assessment approach to the Investors in People standard, although maintaining an external accreditation element, to measure the Council against the higher performance requirements of a Gold employer (achieved in 2009). The Council recognises that in terms of its reputation as an employer, this additional accreditation is beneficial.

Members may wish to consider the additional benefits to the Council of seeking formal accreditation for Member development. As an alternative, a review group of officers and Members could carry out a self-assessment against the framework to identify any areas for improvement.

Should further information on an alternative model being offered from regional employers become available, this would be shared with Members for re-consideration.

8. Finance

Undertaking a formal re-assessment against the Charter for Member Development would cost £1,500. This would be taken from the Member Development budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is as yet unclear whether any changes will be made to the approach to Charter achievement and the response of other Councils in the region. It is clear, however, that officers carrying out reviews will be from another region and therefore not those who previously had a close working relationship with the Council.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Qualification and skills development supports the Corporate Priorities of providing quality education and opportunities to learn and contributes to 'The way we do business' by having the right people, with the right skills in the right place. It also supports the government agenda of raising skills levels of the workforce. Development of Elected Members also supports the Council's Workforce Strategy priority to develop Leadership through change.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Contact Name: Tracey Parkin
HR Manager
Ext: 23742
Email: tracey.parkin@rotherham.gov.uk