

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>4 June 2013</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Members' Training – Members Charter requirements</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To submit the requirements of the Members Charter in order to decide on the way forward.</b>
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Councillor Lesley Day, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee</b>
	<b>Geraint George Head of Democratic Services</b>

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has set up the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development, which is known as 'the Charter'. The Charter was jointly reviewed in 2012/13 with political circles and the member support officers of every authority.
2. WLGA acknowledges that elected members today face increasing challenges, and that there are heightened expectations on them to undertake a diversity of roles ranging from that of a community leader to their special responsibilities within the Council. The Charter was developed to provide structure to the national programme of support throughout Wales in order to assist elected members within their roles.
3. There are three levels to the process, namely
  - The Charter – the majority of authorities could achieve the Charter following only a few months of work.
  - The Advanced Charter – which is more extensive as there is a need to undertake preparation work for a year to achieve the Charter having reached the basic level.
  - Award of Excellence – need to see very detailed support and clear outcomes to the work.
 (See a summary of what achieving the charter will achieve for the Council in **Appendix A**)
4. To apply for the charter the Authority will need to follow the actions noted below:
  - a) Express its corporate commitment to applying for the Charter by signing the statement of intent at a meeting of the full Council.
  - b) Undertake a brief self assessment against the relevant criteria and establish an action plan for any development work to meet the Charter requirements.
  - c) To implement the action plan and submit the self assessment to the Association (The Welsh Local Government Association).
  - d) A peer team will review the application and provide constructive and supportive feedback. Some peers will make an informal visit to the authority as part of their application.

5. A number of the elements contained within the Charter build upon the requirements of the Local Government Measure, outlined in a previous report. Achieving the Charter, along with making arrangements for the Annual Personal Development Reviews endorse the Council's principle for continuously supporting the development of elected members to enable them to participate successfully in their roles.
6. The above also builds on the work achieved by the training sub-group as part of the Democratic Services Committee in the period up to February 2013.

**Recommendations:**

7. It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee express an interest in applying for the Charter for Member Support and Development during 2013/14 and report this recommendation to the next meeting of the full Council to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

## The Charter will:

- Include all aspects of member support, such as constitutional arrangements, a strategic and practical framework for member development, member services and member facilities.
- Be awarded according to agreed guidelines and be voluntarily monitored and assessed by Welsh Local Government through the Association. Progress will be shared with the Welsh Assembly Government.
- When awarded, provide a statement of the commitment by the authority to member support, which can be used to encourage people to stand for office.
- Recognise that each authority will have its own approach, structure and priorities, which are to be welcomed.
- Support the need for all members to have equal access to support and development activities regardless of political allegiance, and recognise the contribution of the political parties to the political development of members.
- Recognise that every elected member brings their own unique skills and attributes to the authority. The Charter initiative is not designed to “clone” members or restrict their behaviour to any “model” but to empower them with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to undertake their chosen role.
- Encourage authorities to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure the equality of access and involvement of all people as councillors.

(WLGA – A Wales Charter for Member Support and Development)