	Standards Committee 11th October 2005 **Report from the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager**
For Information	Wards Affected: NONE
Annual Review of the Member Development Programme 2004/05	

1.0 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the Member Development Programme 2004-2005. The report summarises feedback from members and gives information on events held, attendance, cost of the programme, achievements over the year and issues for forthcoming phases of the programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note this report

3.0 Detail

3.1 <u>Events</u>
A wide range of events have been held over the year. These have been themed around three areas (personal skills, technical skills and role development) and reflect issues which were brought up in personal development interviews at the beginning of 2004 and 2003. The types of session also reflected preferences stated by members, ranging from briefing sessions to site visits. In all 13 events were held over the course of the year. A full list of events can be found in paragraph 3.11.

3.2   Attendance
Altogether the events held provided 149 places for members. Attendance at events was variable, ranging from 5 councillors to 20 councillors. The average attendance at events open to all councillors was 12.8 councillors. 14 members attended no sessions at all – 8 Liberal Democrat, 5 Labour and 1 Conservative. 11 councillors attended five or more events and 25 councillors attended 3 or more events. The average attendance by a councillor was at 2.5 events over the year. The target as set out in the National Charter on Member Development states that members should try and attend at least _five_ training and development events per year.

3.3   Key figures

	2004/5	2003/4
Number of events held	**13**	19
Total amount of places provided	**149**	205
Average attendance per event (which were open to all councillors)	**13**	12
Average attendance per councillor	**2.5**	3.25
Number of councillors who did not participate in any event	**14**	11
Number of councillors who attended 5 or more events	**11**	18
Number of councillors who attended 3 or more events	**25**	40

3.4   Cost
The cost of the programme this year was £18,000. The cost of events range from the most expensive such as the Leadership Academy (£1,250 per person for six days) and presentation skills (£1,000 per session of six people), to those provided by staff or councillors from Brent or other local authorities which had no cost to the member development budget. As with last year, most of the costs for the sessions run at the Town Hall were fixed, so the more councillors that attend a particular event the better value for money. The budget has also been used to fund individual member attendance at conferences and for an event during local democracy week in October 2004.

3.5   Personal development interviews
        Personal development interviews were carried out at the beginning of 2004
        and summarised in the last review of the programme. A review of the latest
        set of personal development interview indicated that there were still
        outstanding issues that had not been covered in the programme so far.
        Therefore it was decided that personal development interviews would not be
        carried out this year and the remainder of issues would be addressed in the
        next phase of the programme. The next set of personal development
        interviews will be held after the May 2006 elections.

3.6   Evaluation of events
        Members were asked to fill out evaluation forms at the end of each session.
        The objectives of these evaluation forms were to give members an opportunity
        to input into and improve the programme and subsequent events. The
        feedback received from these forms, informal feedback directly to the Member
        Development Manager and feedback gathered during the course of the
        personal development interviews 2004 was fed into the programme this year.

        Particularly well received events were:
        • a Finance seminar run by Brent Financial Services. This covered
          issues particularly relevant to members including how the council is
          funded, prospects for the next few years, local taxation and school
          funding. It also picked up on feedback received from the finance
          seminar held previously by being shorter, sharper and allowing more
          time for questions.
        • a visit to the London Assembly followed on from a number of
          successful visits last year. The visit to City Hall was organised with the
          aim of understanding scrutiny in the Assembly and seeing how
          elements of the scrutiny process may be transferable to Brent. The
          day included a briefing from a senior scrutiny officer, watching a
          scrutiny panel in action and an informal discussion with panel
          members.
        • 121 IT training sessions were carried out in house by IT services,
          Democratic Services and the Member Development Manager. The
          aim of these sessions was to introduce members to their new council
          issued laptops.
        • Presentation skills continued to be a popular event. The programme
          which is specifically tailored for a maximum of 6 councillors provides
          an excellent opportunity for members to study their presentation
          technique and ensures that issues can be dealt with on an individual
          basis.

        Less popular events held were:
        • a briefing on the Freedom of Information Act. Although the briefing was
          timely, members felt that issues around this were not that pertinent to
          them.
        • a Sustainable Communities briefing failed to address wider issues for
          members.   The session was incorrectly pitched and many members
          left the session being more confused than when they went in!

One trend that has emerged from the feedback is that members appreciate more time to discuss the subject rather than only being talked at. This year more of that has happened, but there is still room for improvement.

3.7   Achievements

- The programme has been recognised as being a good programme compared to other local authorities and was short listed for the Local Government Chronicle Supporting Local Democracy Award. The main content of the submission revolved around the Member Development Programme.

- Two further members graduated from the Leadership Academy, the highly acclaimed advanced Leadership programme run by the Improvement and Development Agency.

- Six more members have achieved European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) accreditation. More that 40 members now have access to council laptop computers.

3.8   Cross-party working group
A meeting of the cross-party working group was held to review the member development programme so far and consider the programme for the coming year. The meeting was attended by two out of the three groups. This working group reflects that fact that member development is for members of all political groups regardless of whether they are backbench or leading members. It also reflects the fact that members should be as involved as much as possible in planning their own training. This group will be called on as and when necessary to review the programme and address any ad hoc issues.

3.9   Other Issues
Time constraints continue to be an issue for members. This year has been affected with the general election which meant that some of the events had to be postponed from February onwards. This continues to be an issue with the general election in May 2005, by-elections in June 2005 and then in the lead up to the local elections 2006. It is envisaged that there will not be any member development events from January 2006 until after the local elections. A list of planned events can be found in paragraph 3.12.

Much of the work over the next year will focus around the *Induction* arrangements for 2006. Work will be carried out on a cross-party basis to ensure that an appropriate mix of events is held. The programme will also have to cater for two levels of councillors including events specifically aimed at new councillors.

E-learning will be launched later this year for all staff, and is something that will become very important for members. This will give the opportunity for members to undertake training at times that are convenient to them. In addition to this all training materials used in the training sessions will also be made available on the intranet for members.

3.10   Conclusion
As can be seen from the key figures, in comparison to last year although fewer events were held, the average attendance at events has risen slightly. The average attendance per councillor has fallen considerably (although this probably reflects the fact that fewer events were held) and the number of councillors who did not participate at all in the programme has risen. However many more of the events have managed to hit the right note with members and from feedback there seems to be an increase in the quality of events. The programme will provide further events over the coming year, but much of the work will be focussed around induction arrangements for new councillors in May 2006.

3.11   Programme of events April 2004 to March 2005

29 April 2004	Anti Social Behaviour Briefing
06 May 2004	Presentation skills
05 July 2004	Investigation and Questioning techniques
19 July 2004	Community Cohesion Workshop
24 July 2004	Media Training for Executive
06 September 2004	Finance Seminar
27 September 2004	Role of opposition members (Con)
10 November 2004	Standards and Licensing
22 November 2004	IT training 121 sessions
30 November 2004	GLA visit
01 December 2004	Freedom of Information briefing
10 January 2005	Sustainable communities
07 February 2005	2012 and Sports Service

3.12   Programme of events from May 2005 onwards

24 May 2005	Improving Dialogue
21 June 2005	Presentation skills
12 July 2005	Training on councillor web pages on BRAIN community website

13 September 2005 Improving Resident Satisfaction briefing

20 September 2005 Improving Dialogue (part 2)

20 October 2005   Risk Management and Financial systems (tbc)

7 November 2005   'Choosing Health' in Brent seminar

5 December 2005   Backbench members – making a difference
(Brent organised conference for members of WLA)

17 January 2006   Outside bodies – responsibilities of members

26 January 2006   Visit to London Assembly standards committee

6 February 2006   Domestic Violence briefing

date tbc   Conservative Group session

date tbc   Media training

date tbc   Chairing meetings

date tbc   Presentation skills

4.0   **Financial Implications**

4.1   None

5.0   **Legal Implications**

5.1   None

6.0   **Diversity Implications**

6.1   None

Background Papers

None

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