

**Guidance notes on evidence to support an  
application for the North West Charter.**

The following pages provide details of types of evidence which  
could be provided for each of the six elements.

## Having a statement of intent

### *What could be offered as evidence?*

- A signed "declaration of commitment" to the principles of the North West Charter.
- A written statement which has been circulated to all elected members publicly expressing the local authority's commitment to developing its elected members.

Examples of this might be: copies of minutes of meetings where the decision to sign the Charter was made; copy of the "declaration of commitment" circulated to all members; a statement made by the Leader and Chief Executive circulated to all members; articles in newsletters to members, emails to all members.

- A clear indication from a sample of members interviewed that they "have seen a statement of intent, and feel there is a real commitment to the development of elected members".

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## Ensuring that all elected members are made aware of training and development opportunities

### *What could be offered as evidence?*

- Reference to training and development opportunities during new members' induction process.
- Examples of newsletters giving details of development opportunities available within the local authority.
- Training and development appears as an agenda item through the political groups.
- A process which gives members access to information about opportunities for development outside the local authority.
- Information displayed in members' room or library.
- Information on development opportunities displayed on an intranet.
- Information about development opportunities circulated on e-mail or by post.
- Existence of an all party member training group.
- A cabinet member with responsibility for member development who is part of the member training group or who has a direct line of communication with the member training group.

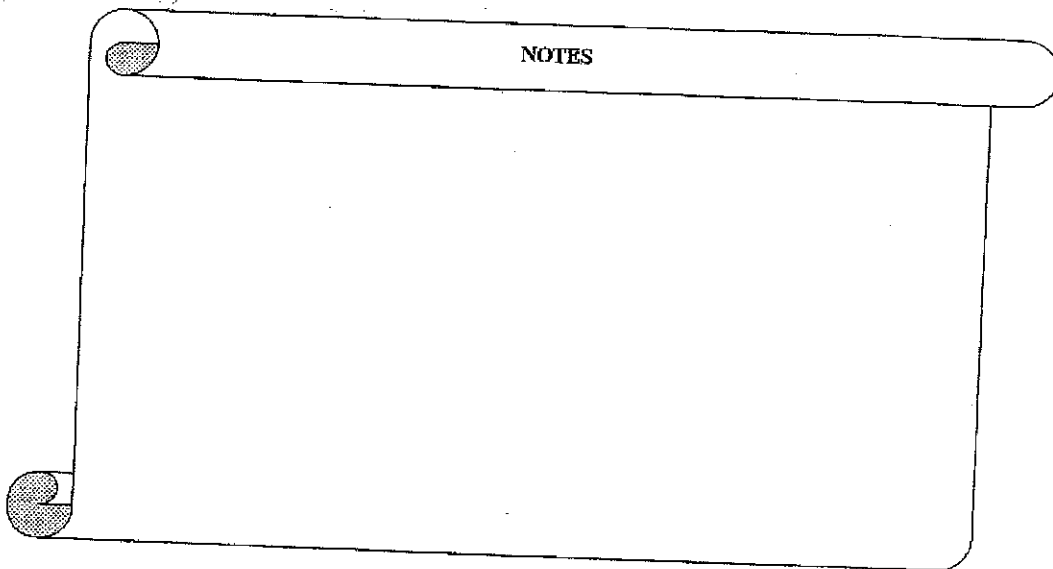
**NOTES**

## Having a process to identify individual development needs which involves members

### *What could be offered as evidence?*

- Completed questionnaires which have been circulated to all members giving them the opportunity to identify what their development needs are.
- The provision of one to one personal development interviews aimed at helping members identify their development needs and how these might be best met.
- Examples of information given to members to help them identify their individual learning styles (individually or as part of workshop).
- A mechanism which involves members in analysing the information gathered from a training needs analysis exercise, eg training and development group
- The nomination of a lead member who is responsible for members' training and development.
- Session plans and summaries from group TNA sessions.
- Examples of completed personal development plans for members.
- Training Programme for a development needs analysis workshop for members.

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## Having a strategy to meet the training and development needs of elected members

### *What could be offered as evidence?*

- A strategy which sets clear direction, and covers identification of needs, resources to be made available, approaches to delivery, evaluation process, and success criteria (preferably which has been formally accepted through a committee or executive forum) and which can be shown to contribute to the local authority achieving its aims and objectives.
- Records of discussions which clearly articulate the direction and key elements of the authority's approach to member development.
- A process to review the strategy, at least annually, which involves elected members.
- Examples of development opportunities which demonstrate that the strategy is more than a list of courses eg, open learning materials, shadowing opportunities, mentoring schemes, etc.
- A process or criteria to determine priorities.
- A link between member development and the corporate aims and objectives of the authority.

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## Having an officer allocated to assist members and groups in identifying needs and providing information on resources

*What could be offered as evidence?*

- Any written reference which informs members which officer they can contact for information.
- Contact details for the officer are made available to new members.
- Details of the available resources in the members' room, newsletter etc.
- That the named officer can advise members on different approaches to identifying their development needs, and can provide information on internal and external training events.

**NOTES**

## About the Assessment Visit

- Each visit will include one elected member from the North West Employers Regional Development Committee or Executive Board plus an officer from North West Employers.
- The visit will be arranged in advance and will last for approximately one day. An officer of North West Employers will liaise with the relevant officer from the authority to make the arrangements.
- A room and refreshments will need to be made available for the assessment team.
- During the visit the assessment team will want to speak to:
  - The Leader (or Deputy)
  - The Chief Executive
  - Leader of an opposition group
  - Chair or portfolio holder
  - Chair or Member of Training Group
  - A newly Elected Member
  - Several randomly picked Elected Members
  - The officer responsible for member training
- The interviews will take around 20-25 minutes
- At the end of the visit the assessment team will give the authority brief feedback on how the visit went. If it was felt that some elements of the evidence were incomplete then the authority would be advised of that.
- If it was felt that the evidence was complete then the assessment team would produce a report for the Regional Development Committee which usually meets twice a year around April and September.
- The Regional Development Committee can:
  - (a) Award the Charter
  - (b) Defer awarding until missing elements are in place
- Authorities can be assessed at any time during the year and after the Regional Development Committee meeting will be told formally that they have been awarded the Charter. However, Celebration Events are only held once a year.

### ***Questions that could be asked at verification visits...***

- How have you made all elected members aware of the authority's commitment to training and development?
- How are new elected members informed about this commitment to their development?
- How often is information circulated to members?
- How are new members informed about training and development opportunities?
- How do members know that they can get help to identify their development needs?
- Is the development planning an ongoing process, is it part of course reviews, open learning material or just once a year?
- How are members involved in assessing the outcomes of the training needs analysis and deciding priorities?
- How was the strategy formulated?
- How were members involved in developing the strategy?
- How has the strategy been communicated to members?
- What has been improved since the strategy has been developed?
- How often do individuals or groups approach the officer for advice?
- Is the officer involved in the discussions about members' training and development needs?
- What resources have been made available to implement the strategy?
- Who has responsibility for implementing the strategy?
- Do you have role descriptions for elected members?