

<b>Report on</b>	Elected Member Development Working Group
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 January 2018
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Eileen Forde, Member Support Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To receive and consider the report of a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on Wednesday 28 November 2018.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Council previously resolved to establish an Elected Member Development Steering Group to provide direction on member development needs and work towards the attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter.
2.2	The steering group Terms of Reference confirms that the business of the Working Group be reported through Policy & Resources Committee.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Report of the most recent meeting of the Elected Member Development Steering Group is attached as Appendix A for consideration and approval. The following issues have resulted from discussion at meeting November meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of personalised stationery for example a ream of headed paper per term of office for the new incoming Council (May 2019);</li> <li>• Refugee awareness session and Universal Credit awareness session be offered to Members in the incoming training schedule</li> </ul>
3.2	<p><b>Charter Status Assessment:</b></p> <p>The assessment took place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018. The Council received official notification that it had been successful in receiving Level 1 Charter Status for Elected Member Development. The letter and final assessment report from the Awarding Body, North West Employers is attached as Appendix B.</p> <p>Continuous improvement is an important part of the Charter Review process and at the assessment, members and officers, put forward ideas for future improvement. The Elected Member Development Working Group continue to discuss these and consider the areas that the council would like to work towards over the next three years.</p>

	It is customary that the Award is presented prior to a Committee or Council meeting by NILGA and as such, we are working to schedule this in advance of the February meeting of Policy and Resources Committee.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: not applicable at this point
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<p>The committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consider and approves the report of the Elected Member Development Steering Group meeting held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November;</li> <li>(ii) Notes that Council has now received Level 1 Charter Status in relation to Elected Member Development from North West Employers;</li> <li>(iii) Consider further the recommendation from the Elected Member Development Steering Group to furnish Members with personalised headed paper in the incoming Council term.</li> </ul>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<p>Appendix A: Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group</p> <p>Appendix B: Letter received from Norther West Employers</p>



## Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group Thursday 28 November 2018

Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group of Mid Ulster District Council held on *28 November 2018* at 6.30pm in Council Offices, Dungannon

**Attendees**    **Members:** Councillors Ashton, Doris, McKinney and M Quinn  
**Officers:**    E Forde, Member Support Officer

**Apologies**    Cllr Gildernew, S McAleer, Corporate L&D Manager  
                     P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Meeting Report 12 September 2018</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted</li> </ul>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Charter Status Update</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Support Officer advised that Council would be made aware of the outcome of Charter Assessment following North West Employers Meeting on 6 December 2018, following which Working Group Members would be emailed details of the outcome.</li> </ul>	Member Support Officer
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	
	<p><b>Members Noted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on training, Personal Training Budget allocation and uses, In-house Links to Corporate Plan, Working group additional membership.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members approved conference report form now to be distributed to those attending outside training, conferences.</li> </ul>	<p>Member Support Officer</p> <p>Member Support Officer</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Learning and Development Training Programme – Proposed Training</b>	
	<p><b>Members Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To progress planning Learning &amp; Development Schedule 2018/19</li> <li>To actively encourage party colleagues to avail of the training</li> <li>To offer Refugee Awareness Training prior to a committee;</li> <li>To avail of offer of Universal Credit Training.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Training for New Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To update the 'Go To' Contacts booklet for new Members;</li> <li>Short synopsis of Terms of Reference for Committees to be delivered to new Members prior to committees in new Council May/June 2019;</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors Allowances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As proposed by Councillor Doris, seconded by Councillor McKinney and agreed by the group that a recommendation be made to Council through Policy &amp; Resources that a ream of personalised paper be provided for Members in the new Council term.</li> <li>Updated information to be sought from the National Association of Councillors with regard to Councillors allowances i.e. availability of iPads, stationery etc.</li> </ul>	<p>S McAleer, C L&amp;D Manager Working Group Members E Forde, Member Support Officer</p> <p>E Forde, Member Support Officer Head of Democratic Services</p> <p>E Forde, Member Support Officer Head of Democratic Services</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Meeting Schedule &amp; Additional Members</b>	
	<p><b>Members Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Members to join the working group;</li> <li>Meeting schedule for remainder of Council term (30 January and 27 March 2019)</li> </ul>	
<b>Meeting concluded at 7.15pm</b>		



Eileen Forde  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Council Offices  
Circular Rd  
Dungannon  
BT71 6DT

6 December 2018

### **NORTH WEST CHARTER FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

Dear Eileen,

We are writing to let you know that North West Employers Executive Board met on 5 December 2018 to discuss your assessment undertaken on 2 October 2018. We are delighted to say that the Board had no hesitation in endorsing the recommendation to award the Level 1 Charter for Elected Member Development to Mid Ulster District Council.

We know that a lot of effort was put into preparing for the assessment visit, including the online submission of the portfolio of evidence. All the information gathered was considered and an electronic copy of the report is also attached. The report includes particular examples of good practice and continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement is an important part of the Charter Review process and on the assessment day both members and officers put forward their ideas for future improvement. It would be useful for the Elected Member Development Working Group to discuss these and consider the areas that the council would like to work towards over the next three years.

We know that investing in developing councillors has been a significant part of Mid Ulster District Council's improvement journey and we applaud and celebrate the commitment shown to continue to improve the support to all councillors.

We would particularly like to thank you Eileen for your efforts in organising the evidence and verification visit.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Bishop  
NWE Chief Executive

Alan Dean  
Chair of North West Employers

Derek McCallan  
NILGA Chief Executive



**Mid Ulster District Council**

**NORTH WEST CHARTER  
FOR COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT**

**LEVEL ONE VERIFICATION**

**VISIT**

**2 October 2018**

## **Mid Ulster District Council North West Charter for Councillor Development**

### **Verification Visit**

Verification visits to authorities are undertaken by representatives from the North West Employers' Executive Board and an officer. On this occasion Councillor Alan Dean, Liverpool City Council and Sharon Senior, North West Employers, conducted the verification visit with Councillor Joan Baird, Causeway Coast and Glens Council.

The purpose of the visit was to verify the information submitted by the council in their portfolio presented for assessment for the Charter on councillor development. The visit consisted of interviews with councillors and officers from the council. Whilst the content of the interviews is confidential, the information gathered has been used to support the submission made by the council.

The following people were seen during the visit:

Councillor Sean McPeake  
Adrian McCreesh

Chair  
Deputy Chief Executive

Philip Moffett  
Sinead McAleer  
Eileen Forde  
Councillor Derek McKinney  
Councillor Niamh Doris  
Councillors Ashton, M Quinn &  
Gildernew

Head of Democratic Services  
Corp Learning & Development Manager  
Member Support Officer

Working Group Chair  
Regional Representative  
Working Group Members

Councillor Mark Glasgow  
Councillor Frances Burton  
Councillor Sean McGuigan  
Alderman Martin Kearney

Randomly Selected Member  
Randomly Selected Member  
Randomly Selected Member  
Randomly Selected Member

Thanks to all those above who gave their time so generously on the day.

	<b>ASSESSORS' COMMENTS</b>
1. Having a clear commitment to councillor development	<p>There is a real commitment to councillor development at all levels in the organisation. From a strategic and political level, there is strong recognition of the councillor leadership role and learning and development being integral to change. Both the Chair and Deputy Chief Executive are enabling and supporting a culture of learning and recognising the value of investing in development.</p> <p>Councillors played an active role in developing the corporate plan, with a cross-party group involved in shaping the priorities and budget for the first four years of the newly formed council.</p> <p>There is an Elected Member Development Working Group which meets on a quarterly basis. A report is presented following each meeting to the Policy &amp; Resources Committee of Council for approval of actions. These papers are received by all Members and decisions from the Policy and Resources Committee are then brought to the Council meeting for approval.</p> <p>In addition to the budget of £7,500, each Elected Member is allocated a £750 personal conference budget. Those interviewed were very complementary about the support provided by the Democratic Services Team and shared their positive experiences of development including induction, 121 briefings and shared site visits which helped to build cross-party respect and communication.</p>
2. Promoting learning and development opportunities	<p>In preparation for the establishment of the new council in 2015, there was a transition programme for councillors and this included a comprehensive range of development including standards, handling the media and scrutiny. With the three Councils amalgamating, 'Getting to Know You' days were organised for staff and members to come together and become familiar with the new council area. There was also a development offer to support the new responsibilities including planning and community planning. One-to-one induction training for the newly co-opted Elected Members has been provided by the Head of Democratic Services.</p> <p>Those interviewed demonstrated a genuine openness to accessing development, found the offer to be excellent and appreciated the flexibility in terms of delivery timings. Councillors acknowledged the social side of attending training and felt that scheduling the sessions before committee meetings has increased levels of engagement.</p> <p>Learning and Development schedules are produced on a quarterly basis in response to the Training Needs Analysis. Regular emails are issued to remind members of forthcoming training events (both internal and external i.e. NILGA) and this seems to be working well in terms of encouraging attendance and maximising resources. Training schedules are also available on the CMIS Member Resource Library.</p>



	<p>Attendance is monitored and training records show that 77.5% of members have engaged in at least one offer of training. Take up of learning opportunities is reported to the Elected Member Development Working Group with party members on the group committed to promoting training opportunities with colleagues.</p> <p>There is a proactive approach to engagement through contacting members who have requested training to highlight what is available. This is supported by one to one encouragement from officers and encouragement within party groupings and there is a real commitment to understanding the barriers to accessing learning. Session times and formats have been adapted in response to feedback from members to actively promote take-up and reduce travel time.</p>
<p>3. Having a councillor-led approach to developing learning and development</p>	<p>The Elected Member Development Working Group was established in 2017. The group agreed an approach to officers carrying out a training needs analysis to develop a draft development programme. The survey was provided to all members to complete individually or with the assistance of officers. Working Group members also encourage party colleagues to flag up training needs either through the group or at relevant committee.</p> <p>The Elected Member Development Working Group is proactive in analysing and prioritising the summary of training needs to inform the quarterly Learning and Development schedules. The group also review the training offered and the levels of attendance. In addition to the schedule of training, there is a responsive approach to emerging requirements with examples such as Rural Needs Training and Refugee Awareness being offered to enable members to fulfil their roles in the community.</p> <p>Those councillors interviewed explained how the development had increased their self-awareness and helped them consider how they might further develop in the role, for example, identifying future committee roles that might be of interest. The development has impacted positively on their levels of confidence; knowing what to do in certain situations and their ability to respond to questions out in the community.</p> <p>There was recognition at a strategic level of the impact that development has had - citing an increased ability to probe, a transferable skill set in governance and effective decision-making. Reference was also made to the work driven by councillors in community development and the development of a multi-agency model. The importance of relationships and how these have developed was also acknowledged.</p>

4. Having a strategy that includes impact measures within a continuous improvement framework	<p>There is a strong culture of continuous improvement at Mid Ulster District Council and this came through in the interviews and was referenced by the visible and transparent performance management processes in place.</p> <p>A draft Elected Member Learning and Development Policy was developed and taken to the Elected Member Development Working Group in 2017. The policy sets out the Council's approach and commitment to the development and learning of its Elected Members. With clear links to the corporate plan, the policy includes clear accountabilities for the EMDWG, members, party leaders, officers and the Chief Executive. During the interviews, ideas were shared on how the future strategy might evolve, ensuring it remains current and builds on the great work that has been done to date.</p> <p>Councillors were able to provide examples of how they have fed back on development events and there is a clear feedback mechanism in place with information being fed back into the EMDWG on a regular basis.</p> <p>Councillors demonstrated a responsible attitude to attending the right development for them and ensuring it provides value for money.</p>
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## **Continuous Improvement**

Although the purpose of the visit was to assess the submission for the Charter, it was also an ideal opportunity to discuss what improvements the council would hope to make within the next three years.

All those interviewed were asked at the end of the interview what improvements they could suggest. They are recorded below to act as a reference point when the Charter is re-assessed in three years.

All the points noted below were agreed with by the assessor team.

- Build on the TNA approach with a move to individual PDP's for councillors to create longer term development plans and increased ownership
- Embrace technology and consider e-learning/webinars as an option to provide flexibility and improve attendance at training
- Refresh the induction offer and consider how existing councillors can get involved in future induction programmes to help shape, lead and nurture the new wave of councillors from the outset
- Reflect any new powers (fiscal, Power of Competence) in the development offer
- Consider how to create and support a culture of entrepreneurialism and the skills needed

## **Special Mention**

The intention of the Charter is to encourage councils to adopt the four key practice points within the standard framework but we hope to encourage and celebrate innovation and excellent practice.

Where we have found "little gems" through the interviews, we will take the opportunity to share these examples and give positive feedback to the council:

- Good evidence of strong political and strategic leadership providing clarity around the strategic vision and direction of the organisation and commitment to the role that councillor development has in supporting councillors in their changing roles
- Member and officer relationships are strong and there is great support from the Democratic Services Team

- Clear examples of the positive impact that development has had on councillors and the organisation i.e. improved confidence to challenge and influence and decision making
- Allocation of £750 personal development budget to members and the willingness to reallocate/share this
- A positive approach to succession planning
- Mentoring/buddying offer
- Recognition of the culture shift in learning and development and the continued ability to look ahead

### **Assessors' Comments**

Mid Ulster District Council has demonstrated a positive approach to learning and development and made great progress in creating the appetite for learning. Councillors are confident in shaping the development offer and can clearly see the benefits for them, the organisation and the community.

### **Recommendation from the Verification Team**

Having reviewed all the evidence, it is our view that Mid Ulster District Council meets the standards set out in the North West Charter on Councillor Development for Level 1.

Signed:



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**Sharon Senior**  
**North West Employers**

Signed:



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**Councillor Alan Dean,**  
**Liverpool City Council**



**North West  
Employers**



Awarded to  
**Mid Ulster District  
Council**

For Level 1:

**North West Elected Member  
Development Charter**



Councillor Alan Dean  
Chair  
North West Employers

Derek McCallan  
Chief Executive

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Gillian Bishop  
Chief Executive  
North West Employers