

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL  
MONDAY, 15TH APRIL, 2013**

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Buckley, Falvey and Wootton.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Pickering) and from Councillors Gosling, Havenhand and Steele.

**18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2012**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, were agreed as a correct record.

**19. REPORT WRITING AND PLAIN ENGLISH - CURRENT POSITION**

Further to Minute No. 76 of the meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, consideration was given to a report presented by the Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing summarising the key issues concerning the standard of report writing within the Council and the provision of information to support the role and work of Elected Members.

Members agreed that there was still cause for concern and that all report authors must endeavour to use plain English and be concise and informative. The Panel asked that a survey of Elected Members be undertaken to identify specific issues and how these could potentially be addressed, along with examples of best practice.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a survey be undertaken and the outcome reported to the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

**20. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME- UPDATE (SPRING 2013)**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser describing progress in respect of Elected Members' training and development activity. The report stated that the development programme recognises the different roles of Elected Members and the needs that arise with changes at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level. Details of the current programme (December 2012 to May 2013) were provided.

It was noted that a full review of training activity for 2012/13 will be submitted in an annual report to the next meeting of this Panel.

Discussion took place on:-

: subjects for inclusion in the forthcoming training and development

programme for the Summer and Autumn months, 2013;

: shared training and development resources available from other local authorities in the region, which helps to reduce costs;

: Parliamentary Outreach - a service available from the Houses of Parliament offering free learning opportunities for local authorities on topics such as (i) understanding the work of parliament and the passage of legislation; and (ii) good practice sharing between Select Committees and local authority Overview and Scrutiny Boards;

: emerging issues (eg: the Government's welfare reforms; the community leadership role of Elected Members);

: Members' training in respect of the responsibility for safeguarding adults;

: Members' training in respect of the use of social media (eg: Facebook; Twitter) for communications.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That arrangements be made with other local authorities/agencies to maximise development opportunities for Elected Members, as outlined in Section 7 of the report now submitted.

(3) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel on the effective use of the member development function to support Elected Members' needs.

(4) That the following development sessions be included as part of the Summer/Autumn 2013 training and development programme:

- (a) welfare reform (dealing with difficult situations; mediation skills);
- (b) the responsibility for safeguarding adults; and
- (c) the use of social media.

## **21. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser concerning the Personal Development Plan process for Elected Members. The report stated that Personal Development Plans enable Members to consider their own skills and strengths against:

- their specific roles and interests;
- broader Council and Borough-wide priorities; and
- rapid changes in Government policy and legislation.

This process allows any identified learning and development needs to be introduced into the training and development programme to ensure that individual needs are not overlooked.

Discussion took place on ways of ensuring the most effective use is made of the Personal Development Plan process, for the benefit of individual Elected Members and of the Council.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That all Elected Members undertake the self-assessment prior to their Personal Development Plan review.

(3) That future Personal Development Plan reviews for Elected Members shall be undertaken on a two-year cycle and on a rolling programme from May 2013 to April 2015, as follows:-

Phase1: Cabinet Members, Chairs of Regulatory Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Chairs/Vice-Chairs, Chairs of Area Assemblies;

Phase 2: Members elected from 2011 onwards;

Phase 3: Other Members.

## **22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel be held on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013, commencing at 11.00 a.m.