

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL  
MONDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2014**

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Gosling, Lakin and Pickering.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013, were agreed as a correct record.

**2. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY - UPDATE (MARCH 2014)**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Caroline Webb, Senior Adviser (Scrutiny and Member Development) which provided an update on progress in respect of Member Development activity.

Further information was provided on the work being undertaken on Personal Development Plans for Members, the previously agreed Autumn/Winter Programme, the Spring/Summer Programme going forward and the generic requests that had been submitted.

Reference was also made to the Members' learning and development intranet pages and the migration of pages to ensure the site was fully accessible on the Council's intranet, accessed by Members on their Council laptops (when logged in) or via the GOOD app.

Other resources have been developed including the Member Online Resource Environment, (M.O.R.E) website. This was a resource listing events, news, information and development opportunities as well as a space to network and share ideas and good practice with other members in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

In terms of regional and sub-regional working Officers were part of strong Member Development Officer Network in South Yorkshire and across the wider Yorkshire and Humber region. Through this network it provided opportunities to share good practice, resources and knowledge with other authorities to maximise value for money.

Discussions were also underway at a sub-regional level to utilize the training expertise of LGiU to deliver sessions locally. In addition, any free national and regional events would be publicised and arranged through Local Government Yorkshire and Humber and the Local Government Association.

Again as with previous years, every effort would be made to support Members in their leadership roles by meeting their specific training needs

(for example Leadership Academy or other bespoke programmes).

The previous Leadership Academy 'offer' included a number of free programmes and several which were heavily subsidised (for example the Young Councillor weekends.) Decisions to support attendance at Leadership Academy (or external training) were based on the training support principals (as agreed on 17th December, 2012), identified need or issues arising from Personal Development Plans, in liaison with this Panel or the Deputy Leader.

Discussion ensued on the value of the previous programme, the previously agreed clear training principles, sessions aimed at practical skills for handling the media, Emergency Planning, the need for further training on the changing role of the Elected Member, chairing and questioning skills sessions and the potential for inviting trainers to Rotherham rather than sending Members externally.

It was also suggested that there should be further sessions on managing expectations for Councillors, with a further report on options being submitted to the next meeting in June, 2014.

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

(2) That the programme as submitted be noted.

(3) That a further report on managing expectations be submitted to the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel in June, 2014.

### **3. INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEW MEMBERS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Caroline Webb, Senior Adviser (Scrutiny and Member Development) which requested that Members consider draft proposals for the induction programme for newly elected Members in 2014.

Further information was provided on the importance of the Members' Training and Development Panel having input into the induction programme, feedback and evaluation of the 2012 Programme and ICT support.

In taking the 2014 Programme forward it was suggested that a two-tiered approach be taken. The first part of the programme would be a concentrated two-day session covering 'essential' information in the days immediately following the election and following agreement of the Programme all prospective candidates be contacted prior to the election and asked to commit to these sessions (if successful).

The evaluation of the 2012 programme showed a number of Members had a very strong preference for evening sessions to accommodate their

working commitments. This practice had since been built into other programmes (subject to the availability of venue/facilitators) and it was, therefore, suggested that if possible, the sessions should be organised around an afternoon/early evening pattern to minimise disruption to employment or other day-time commitments.

If a two-tier approach to induction was approved, it was suggested that the in-depth programme covering the following areas:-

- Member's role in the community.
- Undertaking casework.
  - Understanding ward data.
  - Handling difficult situations.
  - Giving difficult messages.
- Understanding overview and scrutiny.
- Understanding Council priorities.
- Equality and diversity.
- Introduction to planning and licensing.
- Members' role as corporate parents.
- Safeguarding.
- Member's role in emergency planning.
- Communication and media (including social media).
- Council website – accessing information and services online.
- Speaking and contributing to meetings.
- Questioning skills.
  - Introduction to local government finance.

The Programme would be scheduled to run over the course of the municipal year, with elements forming part of the generic member development programme.

It was anticipated that the majority of sessions would be delivered in-house, with any additional costs for external facilitation met through the Member Development budget.

As with previous years, it was suggested that Members be involved in the

delivery of the 2014 Programme and views were sought on how this input could be best facilitated.

It was also noted that each newly Elected Member would receive an updated handbook after the election. This provided information on the day to day running of the Council, the support services available and contact details of relevant staff. Each new Member would also receive a hard copy of the Local Government Association's Guide for New Councillors.

Discussion ensued on the draft programme, which was comprehensive, and would provide the necessary information for newly elected Members. It was also suggested that the Planning and Licensing Regulatory sessions be held as soon as possible and that consideration be given to ensuring training for Licensing was received for new Members prior to meetings taking place, following the example set down by Planning.

It was particularly important for Cabinet Members to provide support to newly elected Councillors and to guide them through the democratic process.

Reference was also made to the Members' Handbook, its content and format and the value that should be shared again with the current Members electronically once refreshed.

Agreed:- (1) That the structure, timing and contents of the draft programme be noted.

(2) That there be a programme of established member involvement in the induction programme.

(3) That the contents of the handbook be refreshed and a hard copy provided to all newly elected Councillors, but that an electronic version be circulated to all Councillors as soon as practicably possible.

(4) That Officers be thanked for their input to the induction programme and the support they provide.

**(THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING URGENT REQUEST IN ORDER TO PROCESS THE MATTERS REFERRED TO)**

**4. LGA FREE CLIMATE LOCAL CONFERENCE: DELIVERING GROWTH AND SUPPORTING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES - MONDAY, 31ST MARCH, 2014 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LONDON**

Consideration was given to a request submitted by Councillor Wyatt, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Lead Member for Climate Change, for attendance at the above free conference with approval being required to cover travel and subsistence.

Reference was made to the criteria and training support principles as agreed at the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 and the current budget provision for Members' training and development.

Discussion ensued on the criteria for such a request, the benefit to attendance and whether information could be obtained from David Rhodes, Corporate Environmental Manager, who was attending as a guest speaker.

Agreed:- That the request by Councillor Wyatt for travel and subsistence to paid from the Members' Training and Development Budget be refused.

**5. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel be held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 commencing at 11.00 a.m.