

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.**

**Date: Thursday, 17 December
2009**

Time: 2.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 22nd October, 2009 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 4)
3. "A Day in the Life of a Councillor" DVD (report herewith) (Pages 5 - 8)
4. Media Training - Feedback (Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Member Support to report)
5. ICOCO (Institute of Community Cohesion) - Progress (Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Member Support to report)
6. Members' Induction Programme - Preparation (Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Member Support to report)
7. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, 21st January, 2010 at 2.00 p.m in Bailey House.

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
22ND OCTOBER, 2009**

Present:- Councillor Sharman (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Gosling, Lakin, Whelbourn and Wootton.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Cutts, Dodson, Hughes, McNeely, Pickering, G. A. Russell, St. John, Sangster, Turner and Whysall and also from Carol Cockayne (Parish Council Representative)

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th September, 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to Minute No. 13 (Alternative Technologies – Pow Wow Now and Meet Me) information had been sent to all Members.

With regard to Minute No. 15 (RIEP Bid) work was ongoing.

With regard to Minute No. 21 (Single Equality Scheme) discussions were ongoing with ICOCO (Institute of Community Cohesion) relating to some collaborative South Yorkshire training. It was felt appropriate for parish councils to be invited.

With regard to e-learning it was noted that it would be ensured that Members were up to date with what they wanted to do. It was felt that e-learning should be included in the inductions sessions for new members.

26. BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND EMERGENCY PLAN

Alan Matthews (Emergency and Safety Manager) accompanied by Claire Hanson (Business Continuity Officer) gave a presentation on the submitted draft elected member guidance document on Business Continuity and Emergency Planning.

The presentation covered:-

- Why an elected member business continuity and emergency guidance document
- Purpose of the document
- Outcome for members
- What next

The proposed launch date for the document, which would also be

available on CD, was 27th October, 2009.

The document covered:-

- Introduction
- Risks and Hazards
- Business Continuity within Rotherham MBC
- Emergency Planning in Rotherham
- The Role of Elected Members
- The Role of the Emergency and Safety Team

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- lessons learnt from the 2007 floods
- communications during an emergency and adoption of the Neighbourhood Watch system operated by the Police which could give regular updates to all Members
- making training more interesting
- national to local response arrangements
- need to notify that a swine flu presentation would be part of training
- training sessions to be open to parish councils
- document to be made available to parish councils when launched
- launch arrangements
- difference between business continuity and emergency planning
- Member awareness of what to expect schools to have in place, responsibilities of schools and all the implications
- reception centres and member awareness of such in their areas
- media sound bites and need to incorporate into training

- media arrangements for the launch
- need for member induction to signpost to emergency planning and the need to attend this training

Agreed:- (1) That the document be approved.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation be requested to authorise distributing the document to all parish councils.

27. TRAINING SESSIONS UPDATE

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, presented the submitted report updating members and raising awareness of the forthcoming training sessions as outlined in the work programme:-

Planning	-	26th November, 2009
Media	-	25th November, 2009
Finance	-	13, 19th and 29th October, 2009

Members noted the information and the receipt of good feedback from the first two finance sessions.

Agreed:- That the Planning training, schedule for 26th November, 2009, be postponed until the new year.

28. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS' MEETING

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, presented the submitted report providing feedback from the above meeting she chaired on 29th September, 2009 with member development officers from Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield.

With regard to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) bid, a meeting had been arranged for 2nd November, 2009 between elected members of the four local authorities to consider proposals.

Representatives from the South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat, South Yorkshire Police Authority and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority had also been invited.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and any suggestions be forwarded to Cath Saltis as a matter of urgency

29. LEADERSHIP ACADEMY - COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAMME – WARWICK - 2ND AND 3RD DECEMBER, 2009

Members considered correspondence regarding the above.

Agreed:- That the matter be raised at Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee and Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel with a view to one scrutiny member being nominated to attend alongside a member of the Executive.

30. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel take place on Thursday, 19th November, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Members' Development Panel
2.	Date:	17 th December, 2009
3.	Title:	"A Day in the Life of a Councillor" DVD
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services (Area Assembly Team) and Chief Executives (Scrutiny Services and Member Support)

5. Summary

Members are asked to support the creation of a short DVD which will be designed to promote greater understanding of the democratic process. The DVD will be used as a borough wide resource to inform citizens of the work of elected members.

The DVD will be a highly effective source of citizenship information in local schools and youth provisions and will broaden both adults and young people's knowledge of local councillors' work. It is hoped that by understanding the role and responsibility both (adults and young people) will be more willing to become involved in the democratic process and stand as a councillor.

It is envisaged the DVD will run for approximately 20 minutes starting with a 2 minute introduction. This will be followed by three 6 minute "Day in the Life" films about local councillors.

6. Recommendations

The Members' Development Panel is asked to:

- **Support the development of a "Day in the Life" DVD and agree appropriate funding from the Member Development Budget.**
- **Identify three councillors to feature in the DVD taking into consideration diversity issues and political balance.**

7. Proposals and Details

In the 2008 Place Survey only 25% of people from Rotherham felt that they could influence local decisions (compared to 29% nationally). It reported that many people in Rotherham did not understand how to get involved, with only 28% saying they are well informed about this subject. Young people are often particularly disengaged from the political process. Research for the Local Government Association by Ipsos MORI shows that just a quarter of 11-16 year olds believe that their local councillor is the best person to approach in order to change something in their community.

The 2007 Councillors Commission report *Representing the Future* stated “A lack of public awareness in relation to what councillors do was mirrored by a similar ignorance of participation opportunities and lack of knowledge how to stand for selection or election. The conclusion (.....) was that in order to encourage people to get involved in local democracy they need to know how the local governance systems work, who their representatives are and what they do.”

In the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (2009) the local authority was given a duty to promote democracy. The specific requirements of the Bill will be used as a guide when preparing the DVD. The overarching duty to promote democracy is set out in Article 1:

- 1 - A principal Local authority has the duty to promote understanding of the following among local people –*
- a) the functions of the authority;*
 - b) the democratic arrangements of the authority;*
 - c) how members of the public can take part in those democratic arrangements and what is involved in taking part.*

Specifically the DVD would address the issues outlined below in article 1.2:

- 1.2 - The duty under subsection (1)(c) includes in particular a duty to promote understanding of the following among local people –*
- a) how to become a member of the principle local authority;*
 - b) what members of the principal local authority do;*
 - c) what support is available for members of the principle local authority.*

The DVD would be a valuable resource, alongside existing materials such as the leaflet “So you want to be a Councillor,” in the council’s duty to promote democracy.

Many councillors are involved in a wide range of activities; from local surgeries to meetings with key partners in the town hall. At a national level, and certainly within Rotherham, many members of the public are unaware of the day to day responsibilities of being a local councillor.

This DVD should reflect the diverse nature of Rotherham’s elected members as far as possible, including party political balance. By filming three “A Day in the Life” narratives the viewer will appreciate that the film is about the role of a councillor and

not a specific individual. It is suggested that a councillor from a BME background, a female representative and a younger councillor would be ideal to appeal to various under represented groups. A key message that the DVD will convey is that local democracy is open to all. It will also show the routes to get involved in the democratic process through surgeries, Area Assembly meetings, School Councils, Scrutiny meetings etc. By broadening the demographic of those who stand as elected members community cohesion could also be improved in the future.

The intended audience of the DVD is varied. The Healthy Schools Team has been contacted and they feel that it would add to the Personal Social Health Education curriculum in schools. Those working within BME communities to improve community cohesion could also utilise the resource. The national Leadership Centre for Local Government (www.beacouncillor.org.uk) has expressed an interest in publishing the resource on their website.

Should approval be given, filming will begin as early as possible in the New Year and a schedule of dates and times will be agreed with the selected members. The work will need to be edited and completed by the end of February 2010.

8. Finance

Neighbourhood and Adult Services have used Plum Pie Media to create a high quality DVD regarding the role of Area Assemblies. A preliminary meeting has taken place between Officers and the preferred production team. The maximum cost of the DVD will be £2,400. £400 has been secured via the Community Involvement Team. £500 has been secured from the Area Assembly Small Grants fund. £750 will be applied for from the Community Leadership Fund of the elected members involved. The Member Development Panel would contribute the remaining £1,000.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

A major risk is the DVD failing to meet the specific duty to promote democracy requirements. The DVD would need to be complete by the end of February in order to avoid "Purdah" restrictions.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The DVD would form an important part of the Councils response to the duty to promote democracy outlined in the 2009 *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act*. The DVD could also fit into the empowerment agenda outlined in the 2008 White Paper *Communities in Control*. Not only would the DVD clearly show members of the public what it's like being a councillor but also the routes for them to get involved in their local communities groups and the bodies which they can use to influence council policies and decisions. *Communities in Control* argues that individuals derive various benefits from community empowerment: people who participate in community activities have been shown to gain from a sense of achievement, increased confidence, and enhanced skills and self-esteem. Similarly, when citizens feel that they can have an influence over decisions and that their voice will be heard and respected, this can improve their sense of well-being and happiness.

In addition to arguments around personal growth that support community empowerment, there are also practical arguments demonstrating the wider impact that empowerment can have upon society:

- More interaction on shared concerns between people of different backgrounds can support more cohesive communities;
- As more people become more directly involved in decision making, this can help to revive civic society;
- It can help bring about improvements in service provision through greater accountability;
- It can bring about solutions to difficult problems faced by society in a way that builds consensus and support.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009)

Councillor's Commission Representing the Future (2007)

Communities in Control (2008)

Place Survey Actions (October 2009) Report to R.M.B.C Cabinet

*LGIU "Duty to Promote Democracy and its Potential Impact on Equalities"
(16/10/2009)*

Contact Names: *John Evans, Scrutiny Officer, x54561*

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