

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Venue: Bailey House, Rawmarsh
Road, Rotherham.**

Date: Thursday, 25 March 2010

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21st January, 2010 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 3)
3. Media Training - Feedback (Min No. 33 of the meeting held on 17th December, 2009) (Officers to report)
4. Update on "A Day in the Life of a Councillor" DVD (report herewith) (Pages 4 - 7)
5. Safeguarding Issues (Officers to report)
6. Members' Induction (Officers to report)
7. Community Cohesion Workshops (ICOCO) (Officers to report)
8. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, 22nd April, 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
THURSDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Gosling (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Dodson, McNeely, Pickering, G. A. Russell, Smith, St. John and Turner.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Cutts, Hughes, Lakin, Littleboy, Sangster, Sharman, Whelbourn, Wootton, Whysall and Mrs. Carol Cockayne (Parish Representative).

37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2009

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

Councillor Smith referred to Minute No. 33 (Media Training – Feedback) and asked when the update report would be submitted to this Panel.

This was noted and would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

38. INDUCTION 2010

Sioned-Mair Richards, Scrutiny Adviser, welcomed ideas from Elected Members to assist with the 2010 induction process for new Councillors and asked if this should be over the two week period following election or a longer term.

Discussion ensued on the induction process and it was unanimous that this should continue over the two week period following the election to assist with new Councillors' integration and understanding of how the Council worked.

It was also suggested that the induction process focus on safeguarding and corporate parenting, with some insight into the role of a Cabinet Member. Councillor St. John was happy to be involved.

39. BE A COUNCILLOR DVD & TASTER SESSIONS

Sioned-Mair Richards, Scrutiny Adviser, reported on the background to the "Be a Councillor" DVD and the script that had been agreed.

Following the presentation of this Panel's previous minutes to Cabinet on Wednesday, 20th January, 2010, Cabinet Members expressed some concern about the impact this DVD may have leading up to the forthcoming election. It was, therefore, suggested that the release date of the DVD be delayed and that this be incorporated into the induction process to provide some insight into the work of Elected Members.

On completion of this DVD further editions were proposed showing some insight into the roles of a Member of Parliament, the Mayor and Parish Councillors.

Discussion ensued on the target audience for the DVD and how widely it would be disseminated. It was suggested that this be subject to further discussion once the DVD had been completed.

40. COMMUNITY COHESION TRAINING – UPDATE

Sioned-Mair Richards, Scrutiny Adviser, reported on the plans for further training, which were subject to a further meeting regarding the details.

Discussion ensued on the content of the training, target audience, the barriers to overcome and how the subject matter was to be delivered for specific areas.

Further information was to be provided in due course.

41. I&DEA LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2009 “THE COUNCILLOR OF THE 21ST CENTURY” - FEEDBACK

Sioned-Mair Richards, Scrutiny Adviser, presented the report of the I&DeA Local Political Leadership Conference 2009 “The Councillor of the 21st Century” attended by Councillors Austen and Sharman on the 5th November, 2009.

The report provided some insight into the workshops available and their content.

Discussion ensued on the access to information by Members via officers and the difficulties facing some Members locating specific services within Departments. It was suggested that some form of chart be made available showing static officers and their contact details.

Councillor Austen welcomed the opportunity to present this report and referred to the Post Graduate Certificate in Local Governance for Councillors and Representatives she had been pursuing through the University of Huddersfield. Councillor Austen explained that she was now considering continuing with the Post Graduate Diploma this year and asked permission to pursue primary research through this Council into participatory budgeting from a political and financial dimension by way of in-depth interviews.

Councillor Boyes had also contacted the Scrutiny Team regarding the launch of the new Council website and asked if anyone had found access more difficult. She welcomed any further information.

Agreed:- That Councillor Austen be supported in her work towards the

Post Graduate Diploma.

42. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel take place on Thursday, 18th February, 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

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| ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS |
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| 1. | Meeting: | Members' Training and Development Panel |
| 2. | Date: | 25 th March, 2010 |
| 3. | Title: | Update on "A Day in the Life of a Councillor" DVD |
| 4. | Directorate: | Chief Executive |

5. Summary

Members are asked to note the progress of a DVD which will be designed to promote greater understanding of the democratic process in Rotherham.

6. Recommendations

The Members' Development Panel is asked to:-

- **Note the progress of the project.**
- **Approve the key content of each Day in the Life.**
- **Agree the proposed project timescales.**
- **Refer the report to Cabinet**

7. Proposals and Details

Councillors are dedicated people who devote a great deal of time serving their local community. 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 do not appreciate the day to day responsibilities of being a local councillor. 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 idea of producing a DVD to be used as a borough wide resource to inform citizens of the work of elected members originated from the Rotherham South Area Assembly and was then agreed by the Member Development Panel. A small subgroup of the Panel has been leading the project. The timescales outlined in the original report (Member Development Panel, December 17th) have changed in order to avoid the pre-election/election period. The DVD will now be completed and made public in late May 2010 subject to endorsement by Member Development Panel and approval by Cabinet. Members of the steering group support the notion that this could be the first in a series of Day in the Life DVDs – others could include “A Day in the Life of a Mayor,” “A Day in the Life of Parish Councillor” etc.

It is envisaged the DVD will run for approximately 20 - 25 minutes starting with Mags Evers, Chief Elections and Registration Officer. This will be followed by Cllr Gosling & Fenoughty discussing the changing role of the locally elected Member. There will then be three 6 – 8 minute “Day in the Life” films about local councillors. Councillors Fenoughty, Falvey and Hussain have been identified as the three members to provide this, but a host of elected members, officers and residents will also feature in the DVD as part of the various meetings and activities that the three main members will attend. The DVD would be a valuable resource, alongside existing materials such as the leaflet “So you want to be a Councillor,” in supporting the council’s duty to promote democracy

Content: The DVD will begin with a “Vox Pop” introduction, filmed in All Saints square, where residents voice some of the questions that the DVD will aim to answer: “I don’t know what a Councillor does,” “I don’t know how to become a Councillor” etc. This would be followed by the Mags Evers piece giving advice about becoming a councillor.

During preliminary meetings with the members involved a broad outline of the Day in a Life scenes has emerged. Across the three days an attempt has been made to cover most aspects of Council business.

- Councillor Falvey believes her Day in the Life should feature the Licensing Board, a Community Safety Action Group walkabout, her work at Safe@Last, an Area Assembly Meeting, and a School Governors meeting.
- Councillor Hussain would like his day to be structured around work, a delegated powers meeting, a meeting with local businesses a street surgery and an event with Clifton Community Partnership.
- Councillor Fenoughty would like his Day in the Life to feature his workplace, a PSHE Scrutiny meeting, a parish council update and a community leadership event.

Each Day in the Life would *not* be filmed on one actual day. At the start of the film a sentence would say something like “Each day in the life is representative and some of the events have been recreated.” The Members involved have agreed to provide a voice over which is crucial aspect of the film.

Timescales: The initial timescales for the project have altered to avoid the pre-election/election period so the DVD will be finally completed after the local elections on May 6th. In terms of the project plan an updated version of this report (with the Member Development Panels suggestions) will go to Cabinet on the 7th April for final comment and approval. Filming each member’s day will begin shortly after. Three young people from Youth Cabinet have agreed to take part in the filming. The young people involved would benefit from shadowing a local councillor and also from the media training and production experience provided by Plum Pie Media.

Kay Denton, PSHE Co-ordinator, has agreed that the DVD would prove valuable in the Personal Social and Health Education/Citizenship Curriculum. The Leadership Centre for Local Government has expressed an interest for to include it on their national website: www.beacouncillor.org. The DVD could be put on youtube and facebook. This would need to be accompanied by a press launch in print media and newspapers. The *Rotherham Advertiser* has already contacted Cllr Austen to express an interest in covering the DVD. The DVD (or individual films) could be played at community meetings with a high proportion of under represented groups.

8. Finance

Plum Pie Media have been contracted to create a high quality DVD .Meetings have taken place between the Members Involved, Scrutiny Officers and the production team. The maximum cost of the DVD will be £2,400. The production team will be paid in three instalments (preproduction, filming and editing).

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Introduction to the DVD has to make it clear that the DVD is not about individuals but rather the role of being a councillor. Agreement would have to be sought in advance to film public meetings. When working with young people consent forms would need to be completed. The DVD would need to be completed after the forthcoming local election.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The DVD would form an important part of the Council's 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 community 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

"A Day in the Life of a Councillor DVD," Member Development Panel (17th December 2009)

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:

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