

**COUNCIL SEMINAR
13th June, 2017**

Present:- Councillor Yasseen (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Atkin, Beaumont, Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Evans, Jarvis, Jepson, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Mallinder, Reeder, Russell, Sansome, Sheppard, Short, Simpson, Steele, Taylor and Walsh.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cowles, Cutts, Marriott, Napper, John Turner, Watson and Williams.

FUTURE APPROACH TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR COUNCILLORS

Councillor Yasseen, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Cultural Services and Chair, welcomed James McLaughlin, Democratic Services Manager, and Bryony Rudkin, Deputy Leader Ipswich Council, who gave a brief overview of the future approach to Learning and Development for Councillors.

With the aid of powerpoint the presentation highlighted:-

Context

- Member development and induction programme has been key in enabling the return of powers to Council
- Local Government Association support
- Aspiration for continuous development of Members to support good governance and representation of communities

Member Development Panel

- Chaired by Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services and made up of 6 other members with cross-party representation
- Developed a draft strategy to inform the Authority's approach to learning and development
- Will have an ongoing role in monitoring the delivery of the strategy

Objectives

- To help Members develop and strengthen their awareness, knowledge and understanding of:-
 - Local and national challenges and opportunities for the Borough
 - Complex issues facing local government
 - Skills and competencies needed in the modern world, including effective communications, community leadership and ICT competencies

What the Council will do to deliver the objectives

- Foster and support a Member-led approach
- Plan a strategic approach

REPORT FOR INFORMATION - 13/06/17

- Develop and deliver an effective Learning and Development programme
- Assist Members to develop their capacity
- Support all Members in the development
- Assess training needs and evaluate learning and development
- Provide a budget and facilities for learning and development

Member responsibilities and commitments

- New and returning Members will participate in the induction programme
- All Members will attend training or briefings on a range of local and national issues
- All Members will attend training on the Code of Conduct, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding
- All Members will participate in specific training sessions related to their role e.g. Planning and Licensing
- Supporting each other through mentoring and advice
- Sharing learning
- Completing pre and post-training evaluation and providing feedback

Learning and Development Programme

- Based on a 4 year cycle that has flexibility to meet the needs of new Members
- Evaluation of need matched to Council priorities, role profiles and the Member Skills Framework
- Personal Development Plan interview every 2 years to identify training and development needs
- PDP interviews in first year during induction and third year of term of office
- Leads to Training Needs Assessment Summary to guide development of Learning and Development Programme

What are the core knowledge and skills for Members/

- Democracy and governance e.g. Committees, Scrutiny
- Legal and constitutional framework
- Diversity and equality
- IT skills, media and communications
- Managing casework and dealing with complaints
- Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting
- Finance and budgets
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Risk and resilience planning
- Partnership working

Delivering the Programme

- Must use approaches that encourage Member involvement and generate participation:
briefing notes and learning guides

e-learning packages
external conferences, seminars and network meetings
inhouse briefings
peer coaching and mentoring
visits to other authorities
training with partner organisations and neighbouring authorities
information from leading sector sources e.g. LGA, LGIU and INLOGOV

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- 85% of Councillors had already participated in the Personal Development Plan (PDP) interview
- Identification by the Strategic Leadership Team of the need for effective communications/interactions between officers and Members and an understanding of Members' requirements
- Provision of training tailored to the subject matter i.e. smaller groups may be preferable for more complicated issues
- Access training more cost effectively rather than attending conferences – use of local universities?
- Creativity in how knowledge and skills were accessed
- Information on attendance by Members at training was stored within their HR portal
- Evaluation of training through a smaller feedback session rather than completion of feedback form
- Complimentary sessions on Planning and Licensing as part of Members' induction
- Should training be mandatory for Planning and Licensing Board Members?
- Support for PDPs being conducted every 2 years
- Smaller list of core knowledge and skills and then details of the next level of training as Members became more experienced
- A schedule of all training available to enable Members so they could plan their own development
- Officers' e-learning package made available to Members
- Fact sheet of what Councillors responsibilities were and those of Officers

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and James for his presentation. It was noted that the comments would be made into the Member Development Panel's meeting on 19th June. The draft Strategy would be considered by the Cabinet/Commissioners Decision Making Meeting in September, 2017.

It was agreed that the draft Member Development Strategy be circulated for comment.