

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

14 SEPTEMBER 2005

Chair: * Councillor Ann Groves

Councillors: * Jean Lammiman * Marie-Louise Nolan
* Paddy Lyne

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**143. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment of Councillor Ann Groves at the Standards Committee meeting on 6 June 2005, as Chair of the Panel for the 2005/2006 Municipal Year.

144. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

145. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.

146. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

147. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Jean Lammiman as Vice-Chair of the Member Development Panel for the 2005/2006 Municipal Year.

148. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the notes of the informal meeting on 12 April 2005 be noted;

(2) Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan wished it to be noted that she had been unable to attend the previous meeting of the Panel and had sent her apologies for absence.

149. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 18.

150. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15.

151. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

152. **Half Year Report:**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy which provided a review of the 2005/06 Member Development Programme and summarised the proposed topics to the end of the Municipal Year. An officer reported that courses during the first half of the Municipal Year had been well attended. It was noted that the sessions currently being run had been requested by Members and that during the next six months, only essential training would be taking place.

It was reported that as only two Members had confirmed that they would attend the Disciplinary and Grievance Appeals Procedures seminar on 13 September 2005, it had

been cancelled. However, it was acknowledged that Members could often attend such seminars even if they had not confirmed in advance. Members indicated that cancelling a session on the day should be avoided due to potential difficulties in notifying Members. It was further acknowledged that having the relevant officers available at the time of the session in case a Member attended would be a waste of resources. It was suggested that, where low attendance had been confirmed, an email be sent to Members 48 hours before the session was due to be held, asking if they would like to attend and notifying them that if no responses were received by the deadline specified, the session would be cancelled. It was suggested that Members be informed that the session on 13 September had been cancelled and advice given to them on the procedure for notifying Group Offices and making the seminar papers available, should this situation arise again.

An officer reported that as no Members had confirmed their attendance at the Special Educational Needs training on 19 September 2005, Members would therefore be contacted and given a deadline, after which if no responses had been received, the session would be cancelled.

The Panel was informed that Licensing training and refresher Chairmanship training was needed and suggested that this be considered for November. As only Members of the Licensing Panel could attend, additional training for all other Members would be beneficial as they might attend and speak at these meetings. The training of those Members not on the Licensing Panel was highlighted as an urgent need. It was suggested that a booklet be produced and distributed to all Members.

In response to Members queries in relation to the training on proposed dates in 2006, the Panel was informed that a Health and Safety session would take place in March 2006 and that no plans had been made for the January and February dates.

The Panel suggested that there should be a session for prospective Councillors prior to the May 2006 election. The format and content of this session was discussed by the Panel and it was suggested that the Harrow website could be used to provide information and should state that if prospective Councillors wanted to find out more, they would be able to attend an open afternoon. It was agreed that a feature be placed in 'Harrow People' to attract publicity to the information available to prospective Councillors. This advertisement should be badged as a Member Development Panel initiative. Prospective Councillors could also use the message board on the website to obtain answers to their questions from Councillors.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) where no Members had confirmed their attendance at a training session, Members would be contacted 48 hours before the session and given a deadline, after which, if no responses had been received, the session would be cancelled.

(3) the Group Manager (Organisational Development) be requested to consult the Service Manager (Community Safety) to establish the most appropriate time for Member training on Licensing.

(4) officers be requested to arrange Licensing training for Members who were not on Licensing Panels but would wish to attend meetings to speak;

(5) information about being a Councillor be provided on the website to prospective Councillors and a feature be placed in 'Harrow People'.

153. **Members Induction 2006:**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy which briefed Members on the preparation of the Member Induction Programme and invited comments on the content and format of the induction programme.

An officer referred the Panel to Appendix B – "Who's who" guide, for comments and suggestions. Members commented that the organisational charts were useful and that Members should receive a hard copy as well as there being a regularly updated version on the website. It was suggested that officers' email addresses be included on the charts.

It was suggested that providing answers to Frequently Raised Issues would be useful although it was acknowledged that officers would not necessarily know what issues Members were asked. Officers could provide a list which all Members could add to, with Members of the Panel encouraging other Members to respond by a given deadline.

Members discussed the content of the Draft Members' Handbook. It was suggested that information on back benching be included with a reference given as to where more information could be found.

The Panel indicated that the code for the keypad to the female members' cloakroom facilities should not be published and that contact details for the Communications Unit should be provided.

A Member commented that refreshments were available at Overview and Scrutiny meetings and that the paragraph entitled 'Refreshments' should be amended to include this in the Handbook.

The Panel requested that all existing Members receive a set of the Directorates' Organisational Structures as soon as possible and that these should be regularly updated. Members should also be provided with a feedback form and comments made.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) Members be provided with a set of the Directorates' Organisational Structures.

154. **References from Council and Other Committees**

(i) Reference from the Cabinet meeting held on 23 June 2005 - Member Training:

Members expressed concern that officer reports were not always succinct. An officer suggested that Members could comment on this at meetings or after receiving draft reports. Members indicated that they would wish to avoid criticising officers during a meeting so it might be more appropriate to thank officers that provided succinct reports. It was suggested that there could be regular evaluation through the use of a feedback form.

RESOLVED: That the reference be noted.

155. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Panel would be held on 8 November 2005.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.03 pm, closed at 7.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR ANN GROVES
Chair