

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

7 FEBRUARY 2006

Chair: * Councillor Ann Groves

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

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Mandatory Training for Members**

The Panel received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy which detailed eleven possible recommendations for the Panel to make to the Standards Committee in regard to mandatory training for Members. In the discussion of the report, the following points were made:

- In the light of changing guidelines, training for the Chief Officers' Employment Panel should also be made mandatory;
- whilst all Members of appropriate bodies should be required to undertake training regardless of experience, exceptions should be agreed by reference to the Chair of the Standards Committee;
- the decision on whether training should be provided by external providers or by officers of the Council should be taken according to the individual merits of the training packages offered by each;
- in the event of a Member not being able to attend training sessions, Group Leaders and Whips should be kept informed of the situation, before being referred to the Chair of the Standards Committee;
- since the rules governing mandatory training for Members should first be agreed by the Member Development Panel, before being recommended to the Standards Committee, an outline training programme should be agreed by the Panel at its next meeting to be held on 4 April 2006.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To the Standards Committee)

That (1) training in the Code of Conduct should be mandatory;

(2) training for membership of the Discipline and Grievance Appeal Panel, Social Services Review Panel, Social Services Complaints Panel and the Chief Officers' Employment Panel should be mandatory;

(3) all Members of appropriate bodies should be required to undertake training regardless of experience, subject to (8) below;

(4) a brief initial training be provided, prior to the first meeting and that this be followed up by a full training session to be held before 30 September 2006, subject to the availability of staff;

(5) training should, where possible, be offered at three or four sessions on at least two different days;

(6) Members be asked to consider whether training should be provided by the best available means, whether this be external providers or officers of the Council;

(7) a record, open to inspection by all Members, be kept of the attendance at all training sessions;

(8) subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Standards Committee, special arrangements for an officer briefing be made where a Member, in exceptional circumstances, is unable to attend any of the training sessions; during the process Group Leaders and Whips should be kept informed, the Chair of the Standards Committee should agree any special arrangements made, and a note should be made in the register of attendance that such arrangements were made;

(9) if it be considered during the life of the Council that further updated mandatory training is needed, then the Standards Committee should have the power to impose such a requirement;

(10) all training sessions should, wherever possible, be open to attendance by any Councillor, whether or not the Councillor is a Member of the relevant Committee;

(11) an outline training programme be prepared, this programme should be agreed by the Member Development Panel and then recommended to the Standards Committee.

[REASON: To ensure risk of challenge of Members' decisions in quasi-judicial circumstances is reduced.]

PART II - MINUTES

166. Attendance by Reserve Members:

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

167. Declarations of Interest:

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

168. Arrangement of Agenda:

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda item be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
8 Mandatory Training	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency, so that a programme of training could be arranged before the election of the new Council.

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

169. Minutes:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

170. Public Questions:

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

171. Petitions:

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

172. Deputations:

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

173. Mandatory Training:

See Recommendation 1.

174. Progress Report on New Member Induction:

The Panel received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which outlined progress made on the New Member Induction programme. The officer present informed Members that the Welcome session had now been shortened, while the "Getting to Know your Borough" tour had been moved to the following week. Members were also advised that the mandatory training would be run through June and July

2006, and that there would be three sessions offering an overview of the different Council Directorates.

Members were informed that the appointment of an Organisational Development Advisor had meant good progress was being made on preparations for the New Member Induction programme. The officer stated that the design of the induction pack and the schedules for the training days would be made available for consultation with Members of the Panel at its next meeting to be held on 4 April 2006. Members stressed the need to attend to the particular audience to which information resources were directed. This meant that while the training DVD should keep its focus on new Members, information pertaining to Councillors on the Council website should be tailored to the needs of the wider community.

The officer advised the Panel that it had been suggested that half hour sessions be held between 5.00 pm and 9.00 pm for the "You, the Council and Community" component of the induction. This would afford Members flexibility and the option of taking short breaks between sessions. Officers also suggested the provision of a Members' chat room as a meeting place, which could also display additional information about the work of the Council. Since training for Outside Bodies would not be provided until September 2006, it was noted that short sessions would need to be run in May 2006. The officer also stated that with First Contact going live on 21 May 2006, it would be ready in time to form the focal point of the Civic Centre tour.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

175. **Update on Spend Against Budget:**

Officers tabled a summary of the Member Development Budget as of February 2006. Members were informed that it was unlikely that the remainder of the budget would be spent, and agreed that there were sufficient funds to produce the Induction DVD, as £7000 had already been budgeted for this purpose. A Member stated that the bid for the following year's funding had not been affected by the underspend. It was noted that all sections of the DVD would need to be approved by the Panel before production could begin. Areas suggested for inclusion were Members' role in Scrutiny, representation, community leadership, Council structure and the Members' Code of Conduct. The Chair also suggested that the DVD should demonstrate some of the excellent outcomes of the work of Members and officers.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Member Development Budget Summary be noted;
(2) the Induction DVD be produced.

176. **Any Other Business:**

A Member noted that two Council events had been planned for the same day which would potentially attract the same Members. It was noted that a common Council calendar could have alleviated this problem.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Corporate Governance be requested to investigate the possibility of having a single Council calendar.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 6.32 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR ANN GROVES
Chair