

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES

30 MARCH 2011

Chairman: * Councillor Brian Gate

Councillors: * Jean Lammiman * David Perry
* Phillip O'Dell * Yogesh Teli

* Denotes Member present

13. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

14. Minute's Silence in Memory of Former Mayor

A minute's silence was observed for former Harrow Mayor and Councillor Keeki Thammaiah, who had recently passed away.

15. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made.

16. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

17. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

RESOLVED ITEMS

18. Information Report: Member Development Programme Update

An officer introduced the report of the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development, providing an update on the Member Development Programme of events that had taken place since February 2011 and highlighted Members feedback about these training sessions. The main points made were as follows:

- to date, 16 out of 20 Members on the Pool of Members to hear personnel appeals had attended the mandatory training sessions;
- that future reports on the Member Development Programme of events give details of how many Members had attended previous training sessions on the same topic, including a running total of all training sessions with attendance figures since May 2010, all of which be provided at the Panel meeting on 2 November 2011;
- the February Quarterly Briefing, which had covered the work of the Registration Service and provisions in the Decentralisation and Localism Bill had been well attended and received positive feedback from Members;
- some Members had requested that Safeguarding of adults and children training be offered twice yearly. Panel Members agreed that these could be covered at the Quarterly Briefings;
- some Members had felt that the Overview and Scrutiny: Community Engagement training had been too big a topic to be covered in a single training session and requested further training on this topic;
- a Member stated that Community Engagement was an integral part of the Council's corporate priorities and was particularly relevant for their responsibilities as Ward Councillors;
- another Member stated that in the future, Overview and Scrutiny training should be taken forward under the banner of Member Development training, as opposed to Overview and Scrutiny training, by integrating Scrutiny training into the Member Development programme. He also emphasised the importance of not duplicating training and avoiding meetings and events clashing with the Member Development Programme;
- it was proposed that the 28 April 2011 training date be cancelled because it fell between two sets of bank holidays and it was anticipated that a number of officers and Councillors would be on leave during that period;
- the training session on 25 May 2011 would cover the use of blogging and social network sites. A Member requested that the training

session be interactive and cover the “Dos and Don’ts” including legal issues. The Member also suggested drawing up a voluntary code of conduct related to this topic as this would ensure that the reputation of both the Council and Members would be protected. He also suggested drawing on the expertise of partners such as London Councils. An officer stated that a contact at jobsgopublic may be able provide a trainer and offer a free training session on this topic;

- in response to a question from a Member, the Chairman stated that blogging and social network sites were increasingly popular with Members and that the Greenhill Ward Councillors had a joint facebook page which enabled them to disseminate information to residents more quickly;
- to date, only 8 Members had completed the Political Skills Framework Online Self-Assessment modules. A reminder had been sent to all Members on 15 March 2011, offering one-to-one coaching. It was agreed that a further reminder would be sent via the party Whips;
- an officer explained that Community Involvement was a separate area of training from Community Engagement. The former would cover consultation with the community and stakeholders;
- that the training session scheduled for 8 December 2011 on ‘The role of a Member during a major incident’, should include scenarios and role play and clear guidelines about emergency procedures to be followed;
- an officer stated that it would not be practical to schedule emergency drills in the evenings, as evening committee meetings were attended by members of the public and few fire marshalls were available in the evenings;
- another Member suggested that agendas for meetings should include an item entitled ‘Health and Safety Announcement’. It was noted that there was no health and safety notice on the table in Committee Room 3. An officer stated that he would liaise with Facilities Management staff about Health and Safety training for Members;
- the powerpoint presentations and other material received from London Councils relating to the recent free Capital Ambition training workshops would be posted on Harrow Council’s Member Development training webpages;
- new Councillors had found their one to ones with Legal and Governance officers useful. Eight more were planned to take place after May 2011;
- outstanding actions from the previous meeting would be followed up by officers. The ‘Buddy’ system, pairing up new councillors with more experienced ones, would be implemented by the next Panel meeting

and a set of draft guidelines for both parties would be presented at the next meeting of the Panel in September 2011;

- a Member stated that Harrow Council's plans to changeover to Microsoft Outlook would enable officers to notify Members of forthcoming meetings and events and enable Members to better manage their diaries;
- the Chairman reported that he had recently met with the lead Member for Member Development at Brent Council. The meeting had been an informal discussion about the possibility of joint working on Member Development training events in the future.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) reports on the Member Development Programme of events provide details of Member attendance at repeat training sessions;
- (2) a running total of attendance at all training sessions since May 2010 be provided at the Panel meeting on 2 November 2011;
- (3) updates on Adults and Children Safeguarding training be provided twice yearly at the Quarterly Briefings;
- (4) the Overview and Scrutiny: Community Engagement training be repeated in 2011;
- (5) the 28 April 2011 training session be cancelled;
- (6) the 25 May training session be on the topic of Blogging and Social Networking and that officers present a draft voluntary code of conduct related to this topic at the next meeting of the Panel;
- (7) a reminder be sent to all Members to complete the Political Skills Framework Online Self-Assessment modules;
- (8) the 8 December training session entitled 'The role of a Member during a major incident' should include scenarios, role play and provide clear guidelines about emergency procedures to be followed;
- (9) officers liaise with Facilities Management about providing Health and Safety training for Members;
- (10) the presentations relating to the Capital Ambition training workshops be available on the Member Development training pages on the Hub;
- (11) the proposed 'Buddy' system be implemented by the next meeting of the Panel on Wednesday 14 September 2011 and a set of draft guidelines for both parties be presented at the next meeting of the Panel;
- (12) the report be noted.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Panel would take place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 14 September 2011.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.33 pm, closed at 8.27 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BRIAN GATE
Chairman