

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES

10 APRIL 2013

Chairman: * Councillor Mrs Rekha Shah

Councillors: * Ann Gate † Varsha Parmar
* Jean Lammiman * Yogesh Teli

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

68. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

69. Declarations of Interest

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

70. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

71. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

72. INFORMATION REPORT – Member Development Programme Update

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development and Shared Services, which provided an update on the Member Development Programme of events that had taken place since the last meeting of the Panel. The report also sought Members' views on next steps for achievement of the Member Development Charter and on plans for the Member Development Programme for 2013/14.

The Divisional Director made the following points about Members' attendance and feedback regarding recent Member Development training events:

- most training sessions had been reasonably well attended, however, attendance at one of the Council Tax briefing sessions had been poor;
- feedback provided on the evaluation forms for these sessions had been largely positive, and Members had requested further training on most of the topics covered. However, one Member, who had attended the Personnel Appeals Panel training had indicated that the training session had not been useful;
- the EqIA refresher training for Cabinet Members had been well attended and received positive feedback;
- the February Quarterly Briefing had been postponed to 2 May 2013 and the March training session had been postponed to 25 July 2013. It was envisaged that this latter training session would be a launch event for the 2013/14 Member Development programme.

Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- Members had been given a briefing about Council Tax at Group meetings earlier in the year and the 18 February Council Tax training session had taken place during the week of a By-Election, both of which could account for the poor attendance at both Council Tax training sessions;
- a Member who had attended the CIPFA training for GARM Members had in his evaluation questionnaire asked for further information about the 'Fraud Red Book', and this information should be forwarded to the relevant Member and Panel Members as soon as possible.

London Boroughs Charter for Elected Member Development: Update on Progress

The Divisional Director stated that the deadline set for submission of additional evidence was the end of May 2013. He added that taking into consideration the statistics in recent Member Development Panel reports, in his view, Harrow could not currently demonstrate the required levels of

Member engagement and commitment as set out in the Charter Assessors' report. He proposed that the Panel and Groups should encourage and facilitate increased Member participation in training over the coming year and Harrow could re-apply for the Charter standard at a later date, once it could demonstrate the required level of improved Member engagement with training.

Members made the following comments:

- it would be preferable to re-launch the Member Development programme at the launch event in July 2013 and work to incentivise and motivate increased Member engagement with training and development;
- the Labour Group was in the process of implementing a contract with its Members, and it was envisaged that attendance at training would be an integral aspect this;
- accreditation of Members' learning and development should be further explored and reported at the next meeting of the Panel.

Members made the following additional comments with regard to accreditation of Members' learning:

- most Members would benefit from and be receptive to some form of accreditation of their learning and development and this could be promoted among Members as part of their overall career development;
- the accreditation scheme currently being used by Lambeth Council should be explored further;
- in recent years, the College of Law had expressed an interest in providing some form of accreditation of Members' learning, specifically focussing on legislation;
- Warwick Business School offered an MBA which newly elected Councillors may be interested in;
- Learning Pool may be able to offer accredited e-learning modules in relevant topics and develop Modules specific to the needs of Harrow Councillors.

The Divisional Director undertook to look into the feasibility of the above suggestions from Members and report back at the next Panel meeting.

Member Development Programme 2013/14

The Divisional Director reported that the Member Development programme for 2013/14 would begin with a launch event on 25 July 2013. It was anticipated that this event will be an open forum discussion led by the Office for Public Management (OPM) and focus on changes in national and local

government, and its impact on how services could be delivered in the future. The event would launch a series of development events between Members and officers with an emphasis on strategic issues. The possibility of joint working with neighbouring authorities such as Brent and Ealing was also being investigated.

Panel Members commented that the launch event and revised training programme were an excellent idea and that they supported it fully.

The Chair reported that she had recently met with the Lead Member for Member Development at the London Borough of Brent with a view to further exploring the possibility of joint working in this area. The proposal from Brent that Members from Harrow be invited to attend a forthcoming Member training event being arranged by Brent at its new Civic Centre site in September 2013 on the topic of 'Leadership Skills for Members', was agreed. This event could be promoted as a pilot event to assess the level of Member interest and possible benefit to Members of both authorities. The cost of refreshments at this event to be would covered by Harrow, subject to further discussions with Brent.

Plans for Member Induction 2014

The Divisional Director reported that planning for Member Induction following the local elections in 2014 was underway and that this would be reported at the next meeting of the Panel.

Follow-up Actions From the Previous Meeting of the Panel

The Divisional Director advised that most of the follow-up actions from previous Panel meetings had either been completed or were ongoing.

The Chairman stated that this was the final meeting of the Panel of the current Municipal Year and thanked Members and officers for their hard work and contribution to the work of the Panel.

73. Date of Next Meeting

1 October 2013.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 8.25 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MRS REKHA SHAH
Chairman