

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES

3 APRIL 2014

Chairman: Councillor Janet Mote, Vice-Chair in the Chair

Councillors: * Mrinal Choudhury * Paul Osborn
* Krishna James * Mrs Rekha Shah

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

90. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Yogesh Teli

Reserve Member

Councillor Paul Osborn

91. Declarations of Interest

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

92. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

93. Public Questions, Petitions & Deputations

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

94. 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 Divisional Director made the following points about Members' attendance and feedback relating to recent Member Development training events:

- most training sessions had been reasonably well attended and 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;
- some of the feedback in the evaluations relating to the content of training sessions would be communicated to the relevant heads of service;
- the training scheduled for 27 May 2014 would be cancelled and the new programme of Member Development Events would be launched at the Members' Welcome Evening, following the local elections in May.

Members made the following comments:

- there may be a number of reasons for poor attendance at training;
- the issue of low attendance at training and implementing measures to tackle this should be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Panel;
- the Party Whips should be emphasising the importance and value of attending training to their Members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

95. Accreditation

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director of Human Resources and Development & Shared Services regarding Accreditation of Members' Learning. An officer advised that:

- Harrow had failed to achieve the Member Development Charter following assessment in 2012. Feedback from the assessors had indicated that the range and quality of Member Training was extensive and varied, however, consistently low levels of Member engagement with training had been flagged up as an area for concern. She proposed that the Panel re-assess whether to submit a revised portfolio of evidence for assessment in 2015/16;
- the Political Skills Framework (PSF) module available via the Modern Councillor portal, which had been adopted by many authorities nationally, could be used by Members to plan career pathways and personal development plans. The PSF had more breadth and depth and was focused on developing member competence, skill, knowledge and experience and had a set of positive and negative indicators/behaviours that could be used to identify strengths and areas for development. The online portal allowed 24-hour access and enabled Members to work at their own pace and in their own time. She added that in the current economic climate, E-learning was both a flexible and economically viable option. Additionally, the MyLearning Portal which would be launched to Members, would allow them to print off Certificates of Attendance for each training session attended.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

96. Plans for Member Induction 2014

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development and Shared Services, which updated the Panel regarding plans for the Members' Welcome Evening, Members' Handbook and the Member Induction Programme for 2014 following the local elections in May 2014.

The Divisional Director stated that, the first of these events, an information evening for prospective candidates, was the first event of its kind in Harrow. The event had been widely publicised and was attended 82 individuals, 30 of whom had completed evaluation forms. Feedback had been very positive, with most attendees saying they had found the event very or fairly helpful. The Chair congratulated officers for organising a successful event.

The Divisional Director stated that:

- the Members' Induction Pack 2014 would be distributed to successful candidates at the Count following the local elections on 22 May 2014. The booklet would contain key information that Members would need during their first few weeks;
- the programme for the Members' Welcome Evening would follow the same format as in 2010;
- the Members' Handbook would be scaled down in both size and content, and would be distributed at the Members' Welcome Evening on 29 May 2014;

- the Member training programme for the first six months would include mandatory, Councillor skills training and skills-based training;
- all new and returning Members would be asked to complete a training needs analysis, which would be used to plan the programme going forward. All new and returning Members would be informed and asked to diarise all training dates for 2014;
- a Member suggested that the Protocol on Member officer relations be omitted from the Members' Handbook as much of it was no longer relevant;

Members agreed that a simpler guide than the protocol should be made available to Members going forward. The Divisional Director undertook to discuss this with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources and should contain specific reference to the duty on Members' to attend training and development events, under the heading of General Obligations.

A Member suggested that the foreword from the Chair of the Member Development Panel be included in the Induction Pack and that dates of the Corporate Equalities training be included in the calendar of Member Training dates and that these sessions be opened up to Members;

Members commented that they were pleased with the content and format of the Induction Pack and with the proposed content and format of the Members' Handbook.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

97. Date of Next Meeting

10 September 2014.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.20 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR PAUL OSBORN
Chairman