

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES

7 JANUARY 2010

Chairman: * Councillor Yogesh Teli

Councillors: * B E Gate † Phillip O'Dell
* Jean Lammiman * Paul Osborn

* Denotes Member present
† Denotes apologies received

100 Attendance by Reserve Members

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

101 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that no declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

102 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

103 Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

To note that no public questions were put or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 19, 16 and 17 respectively.

RECOMMENDED ITEM

104 Member Development Programme Update

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development, which reviewed the progress in delivery of the current Member Development Programme, and outlined the forthcoming events for the remainder of the 2009/10 Municipal year.

An officer provided an update on recent staffing changes within the Human Resources and Development team. He advised that following the departure of a lead officer responsible for Member Development, a new member of staff had joined the team in a consultancy capacity. Members expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation for all the work previously done by the departing officer.

The officer advised the Panel that Harrow Council had been awarded the Member Development Charter for demonstrating good practice in Member Development, and advised that an option for the future was to seek Charter Plus status.

The officer reported that it was not his intention to abandon the 360 degree appraisals, and added that feedback from those who had used the development tool had been encouraging. Members added that 360 degree appraisals had been worthwhile as they highlighted areas for improvement and aided those with more experience to refresh and build on their existing skill set. In response to a question, the officer stated that Members would be required to have at least one year's experience in order to benefit from using 360 degree appraisals.

It was noted that the Member Development Programme had been costed through the Roffey Park Institute, an organisation whose mission was to develop people and organisations to their full potential. Members suggested that a 'learning contract' could be devised for Members to agree to be part of a professional learning process and commit to Member Development. The officer stated that a contract was something that could be looked at.

A Member suggested the possibility of introducing Podcasts as a way of posting Member Level meetings on the internet. Members were of the view that Podcasts would help those with disabilities, link better with the community and get more people involved. A Member stated that the benefits of introducing this initiative would need to outweigh the cost implications.

A discussion took place around the number of Members who had attended Member Development activities and whether more could be done to ensure that Members attend training events relevant to them. A Member stated that to be able to identify which Members had not attended training, evidence would be needed. He added that by using this evidence, discussions could take place amongst Members, which could help identify the reasons why attendance was low. The officer advised that he would contact Group

Leaders and work closely with them to ensure that every effort was being made to increase the level of attendance.

In discussing how administrative staff advertised training events, the officer suggested that a protocol be drawn up which clearly set out the roles and duties of the Member Development administrative staff, so that Councillors and staff were fully aware of each others responsibilities. Members agreed that this was a good suggestion, with the Chairman adding that this protocol should be included in the new Members' induction pack.

The officer invited Members of the Panel to suggest topics for inclusion in the next Members' Quarterly Briefing, which would be issued in March 2010. He confirmed that he would remind staff to invite those from the voluntary sector. Topics that were suggested by Members included:

- what candidates in the election can and cannot do, and who to contact for advice;
- a question and answer session with a polling clerk.

A Member stated that if the Members' Quarterly Briefing included topics on the forthcoming election more people were likely to attend.

A discussion took place around particular ways of rewarding Councillors for their attendance and contribution to the Member Development Programme. Members suggested that those who had undertaken a certain amount of learning development could receive an accredited certificate for their contributions. Members added that this certificate could be transferable to their Curriculum Vitae (C.V). It was agreed that a yearly certificate could be awarded to Members who had demonstrated a level of dedication to the Member Development Programme, and that the information relating to the award of certificates would be incorporated in the induction pack. The officer agreed to send the design for the certificate electronically to the Panel for approval.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Portfolio Holder)

That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the proposed amendments to the 2009/10 programme be agreed.

RESOLVED ITEM

105 INFORMATION REPORT - Planning for 2010 Member Induction Update

An officer introduced a report of the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development, which outlined the proposals for the 2010 Member Induction Programme. A Member proposed the possibility that there could be two levels of induction offered, a level for newly inducted Members and a more advanced level for Cabinet and the new opposition. He added that it was essential to induct as early as possible. The Member also recommended that Charing Skills, scheduled in the Member Induction for September, October or November 2010, be brought forward to June 2010.

Members voiced concerns that the planned induction took an integrated approach, adding that it was essential to make use of active learning sets.

A Member stated that he felt more interaction was needed between Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Performance Lead Members. He added that it would be appropriate for discussion to be held with Scrutiny officers on this matter.

In relation to a question on delivery methods of training, an officer proposed that a diagram be drawn up which showed new Members where to go and who to see if they had any issues. An officer added that a draft diagram was being worked on, and would be presented to the Panel for feedback.

Members discussed the possibility of introducing assessments for Members in areas such as Licensing. A Member felt it was essential that the possibility of assessments was considered, particularly in relation to Licensing Panels, Planning Committees and Personnel Appeals. He felt that these tests would be beneficial in testing Members understanding and identify new training needs.

In relation to the Induction Pack, a Member suggested that Member Development Programme should form part of the presentation at the Members' Open Evening. The Chairman also stated that new Members should be informed of the responsibility to reach the Charter Plus standard.

In response to a request the Divisional Director Human Resources and Development, undertook to ensure that all candidates were informed of the key member induction dates in the Council's Calendar.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.14 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR YOGESH TELI
Chairman