MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL
MINUTES

1 FEBRUARY 2011

Chairman: *   Councillor Brian Gate

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

*   Denotes Member present

7. **Attendance by Reserve Members**

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

8. **Declarations of Interest**

   RESOLVED: To note that the following personal interest was declared:

   <u>Agenda Item 7: References from Council and other Committees/Panels - Reference from the Standards Committee</u>

   Councillor Brian Gate declared that he was a Member of the Standards Committee. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

9. **Minutes**

   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

10. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations**

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

11.   References from Council and Other Committees/Panels

Members of the Panel considered a reference from the Standards Committee meeting, which detailed the Committees Independent Members observations of a range of Council meetings that they had attended.

Members discussed that:

- it would be an ideal opportunity to gauge feedback from newly elected Members on the positives and negatives of their experiences thus far;

- encouraging pre-meeting briefings with officers and Members would help to address the key points within reports prior to the meeting, and ensure comprehensive responses from officers during the meeting;

- incorporating a frequently asked questions database into the new IT system would create a source for Councillors to refer to. This would prevent questions or information being duplicated, resulting in more time for informed debate at meetings;

- less formal means of communication between Members and officers should be encouraged;

- structure diagrams, such as for the Council's decision-making process, would promote greater understating among Members and the public.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the reference be received and noted;

(2)   officers provide a progress report on the suggestion of developing structure diagrams to a future meeting of the Panel;

(3)   the feasibility of incorporating a question and answer database into the new IT system be explored.

12.   INFORMATION REPORT - Member Development Programme Update

An officer introduced a report which provided an update on the Member Development Programme events that had taken place since September 2010, and on the progress of the Member Development Programme.

The officer advised that:

- training for the pool of Members on the Licensing and Planning Committees had now been completed;

- an additional training session for the Personnel Appeals Panel Members had been scheduled for March. This would bring the completion rate to 75%;

- 34 Members were required to complete Equality & Diversity training;

- 9 Members had completed and returned the Member induction evaluation forms. Feedback from these Members was positive;

- a Member Development webpage would be launched on the Council's intranet in February. This webpage included information that enabled Members to tailor the Development Programme to their specific needs. Members were pleased with screenshots of the webpage that were circulated at the meeting.

In response to questions, officers advised that;

- Chief Whips and Group Leaders would be informed of Members who had attended training events;

- 8 Members had used the online assessment tool;

- the possibility of creating a personalised calendar of all events for Members to help identify skills gaps, would be considered;

- commissioning the Local Government Information Unit think tank to engage with Members and residents at all levels, would be investigated;

- meetings had been held with the newly elected Members to highlight the strengths and weaknesses throughout their induction period. Data from these meetings would be collated and fed back to a future meeting of the Panel;

- a procedure note for Council meetings had been created and was now in place;

- establishing a 'Buddy' system for new Members would be explored;

- for future induction programmes, prioritising training on the management of constituents' casework would be considered;

- sharing the resources for training events with neighbouring boroughs would be investigated.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be noted;

(2) Chief Whips and Group Leaders be informed of Members who had attended training events;

(3)   creating a personalised calendar of all events be investigated;

(4)   feedback from meetings with newly elected Members be presented to a future meeting of the Panel;

(5)   a 'Buddy' system for new Members be explored.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 8.55 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BRIAN GATE
Chairman