

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES

3 APRIL 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Phillip O'Dell

Councillors: * Jean Lammiman * Mrs Rekha Shah
* Varsha Parmar * Yogesh Teli

* Denotes Member present

39. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

40. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 8 - Information Report: Member Development Programme Update

Councillor Jean Lammiman declared a personal interest in that she was a trustee at the Harrow Equalities Centre. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted on.

41. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

42. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

43. References from Other Committees

The Panel received a reference from the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee (GARM) meeting held on 26 January 2012 advising the Panel of the view that the training provided to Members in dealing with major incidents be made mandatory.

Panel Members agreed that this training should be made mandatory. The Divisional Director of Human Resources and Development and Shared Services stated that this training was offered to Members annually and the most recent session had been in December 2011. In the future, this training would be identified as mandatory.

A Member stated that at a previous Panel meeting Members had agreed that the Service Manager for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity be requested to produce a wallet-sized, laminated aide-memoire about the role of a Member during a major incident, for distribution to all Members. Panel Members went on to suggest that health and safety training and guidance on lone working also be made available to Members.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)

That the training provided to Members in dealing with major incidents be made mandatory.

Reason for Decision: To ensure effective training for all Members.

RESOLVED ITEMS

44. Re-signing of the commitment to the Member Development Charter Mark Plus

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Bill Stephenson, the Leader of the Council, Michael Lockwood, Chief Executive and Christiane Jenkins, Director of Corporate Governance from London Councils, to the meeting to take part in the official launch of the re-accreditation process for the Member Development Charter Mark in 2012.

An officer stated that the process for re-accreditation for the Member Development Charter Mark was underway and that this year Harrow would be aiming for Charter Mark Plus status. Officers were carrying out a 'gap' analysis, the results of which would be shared with South East Employers, who delivered the Charter award to the London Boroughs on behalf of London Councils, and the Member Development Panel. The accreditation process was due to be completed by September 2012.

The Officer invited the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, the Chairman and the Nominated Member for the Panel to sign the commitment to the Charter to launch the re-accreditation process. Christiane Jenkins, representing the Chairman of London Councils, Mayor Jules Pipe, made a brief speech during which she made the following points:

- the Member Development Charter was awarded in recognition of the investment and value a Council placed on Member Development. She praised Harrow for its re-commitment to Councillor Development and to retaining the Charter;
- Member Development was critical as it would enable Councillors to engage, empower and lead their local communities, achieve and deliver strategic priorities and manage the challenges and opportunities of the Localism Agenda.

Ms Jenkins concluded by congratulating Harrow for its commitment to the Member Development Charter Plus Mark, wishing it every success in this endeavour.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted.

45. Information Report: Member Development Programme Update

Having signed the commitment to the Member Development Charter, 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 reported that the Office for Public Management (OPM) had delivered a progressive series of 3 training sessions since January 2012. The first of these had not been well attended and had received mixed feedback; attendance at the second session had been better and had elicited very positive feedback; feedback from the third session which took place on 28 March had not yet been evaluated and would be reported to the next Panel meeting. He added that fliers publicising Member Development Events now provided greater detail about the aims, outcomes and the training session plan. This information had proved useful in helping Members to decide whether a particular training session would be useful to them and, in his view, had led to increased attendance at Member training events. Additionally, the February 2012 Quarterly Briefing had been well attended and the feedback had been very positive. Figures showed that the Quarterly Briefings were better attended than other Member training events. He added that the learning evaluation form would be amended to enable collection of feedback on each element of the Briefing and whether Members would be interested in more targeted training in a particular area. Officers would also look into the possibility of offering more Quarterly Briefings but fewer Member Development events.

During discussion, Members made the following points:

- one Member stated that she had attended all three of the OPM training sessions and had found them useful. However, some Members had not realised that this had been designed as a progressive series of training sessions and that those Members who had attended all three sessions would have benefited the most, rather than those who had attended only one session. She added that, in her view the trainer had wide experience and knowledge of local government and the role of Councillors and should be approached in the future to provide further training;
- another Member stated that the Quarterly Briefing on Housing and on Procurement had been particularly good, and the officers presentations had been very accessible;
- the Chairman of the Panel made the distinction between the presentation of information and development and stated that he was agreeable to increasing the number of Quarterly Briefings. However, he would prefer to keep the same number of Member Development training sessions;
- the Chairman of the Panel also suggested that the Council's Street Lighting Strategy, which could be linked to climate change issues and the green deal, would be an interesting topic for a future Quarterly Briefing. He also suggested approaching the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance to provide a briefing on the Council's new service delivery models;
- a Member of the Panel stated that the Quarterly Briefings should focus on highlighting current issues and challenges within Harrow to Members, as this would enable Members to advise residents and manage their expectations better;
- another Member emphasised the importance of making Members aware of cross-borough issues, such as Shared Services between authorities.

The Divisional Director stated that in order to encourage more officers to come forward to provide training at the Quarterly Briefings, he would request the Organisation Development Team identify this as a development opportunity through management development training.

Following further discussion by the Panel, the Divisional Director advised that:

- in the past London Councils had not provided Harrow with Member feedback about Member training events organised by them, but that he would request this information in the future;
- the dates for the IT training were being finalised for the 23 Members who had completed the training needs analysis and these would be publicised to Members shortly;

- he had been in discussions with representatives from both MIND in Harrow and Harrow MENCAP. Both organisations felt that they would prefer to offer a whole day of training for Members, but understood that this may inhibit attendance. MIND had advised that some aspects of the training would require more time, in particular the personal testimonials from individuals, which was considered a very powerful aspect of the training, would require a longer training session. Following comments from Members of the Panel, the Divisional Director undertook to suggest two separate training sessions, one with MIND and one with MENCAP on the topic of Mental Health Awareness.

A Member of the Panel stated that MENCAP offered a service called 'community solutions' and also offered personal budgets to their clients. She suggested that future training in the area of Mental Health awareness could be linked to the work of the Adult Social Care section. The Divisional Director undertook to contact the Divisional Director of Adult Social Care to discuss this matter further.

The Divisional Director confirmed that together with the Equalities and Diversity Policy Officer he would seek to involve Harrow Equalities Centre in future equalities training for Members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

46. Date of Next Meeting

An officer advised that the next Panel meeting was scheduled to take place on 12 September 2012. However, it was noted that a special meeting might be held in June 2012 to update Members on the progress of the re-accreditation process for the Member Development Charter Plus Mark.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.25 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR PHILLIP O'DELL
Chairman