

Minutes of the Member Development Advisory Panel



Location: Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

Date: 4th January 2024 commencing at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillors: P. Beadle (Chair), A. Burrell, P. Dann, P. Elliott, M. Graves.

Officers: L. Elliott – Deputy Chief Executive
E. Newman – Democratic Services Officer

1. Introductions

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Investiture of Chairman

As per the Terms of Reference for the Member Development Advisory Panel, the members confirmed that the Chair of the Panel would be the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Cllr Beadle.

3. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

4. Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Terms of Reference (TOR)

The Terms of Reference of the Panel, which were agreed by the Cabinet on 27th November 2023, were provided to the members of the panel.

The Chair opened the discussion up to the panel for any comments or questions.

It was raised that the second half of the Membership section should be moved to 'The Role' section, to ensure that the Terms of Reference is as clear as possible. It was asked that officers take this away to ensure accuracy.

It was clarified by the officers, that this panel was a replacement of the Member Development Working Group from the previous administrative term. The Panel encouraged that they wanted to see the work completed by the previous working group. It was suggested that the Member Induction Programme rolled out after the most recent election, along with any other training provided to the councillors, be brought to the panel to be reviewed as a starting point for the future work of the panel.

The Terms of Reference's focus on the 'paper lite' approach and transferral to electronic despatch of agendas and other council documents was identified as an area that would like to be reviewed by the Panel.

It was confirmed that **Item 6** Future Meeting Dates be moved to **Item 7**, and **Item 7** Work Plan, be discussed after **Item 5**.

6. Work Plan

The Deputy Chief Executive gave a verbal report on the Work Plan to the panel.

She identified that position statements on the current processes relating to Member Development should be provided to the panel. It was confirmed that officers would go away to do analysis on current member training. It was advised that records of current Member Training be brought back to the panel to review, however this data was only held in regard to internal training. It was highlighted that asking members the best ways to deliver/ access training (e.g. Learning Matters, external training, hybrid internal training) would be important in the work of the panel. It was suggested that specific role profiles be developed (e.g Chair, Portfolio Holder) to create tailored training profiles. Free training through external

agencies was emphasized as an important resource that is already available. The panel would need to decide how funding for specific need training, where a special role/skill had been identified, would be allocated. The case was made for a training/approval criterion to be developed for members.

The Panel asked whether there was a record kept of training undertaken by Councillors. It was confirmed that there is a record of councillors who have and have not completed mandatory, and induction training, as well as attendance at member briefings given throughout the year. Reminders to complete mandatory training are provided to councillors via email.

Attention was brought to the importance of promoting training and encouraging members to attend. It was vital to ensure the training is easily accessible, and the importance of the training in the development of themselves in the role of Councillor was promoted.

The importance of committee specific training – e.g. The Planning Committee having training on the new NPPF. However, it was also noted that training should be extended out to all councillors. Training on the use of Microsoft Teams was identified as an important session to be provided.

Looking at councillors' skills and abilities developed over professional life outside of the council would be used to understand what is needed further. It may also be important to ask what the Councillors would like to develop personally. It was suggested that a skills audit of members could be undertaken. It was also noted that peer to peer knowledge sharing between newly elected councillors and longer serving councillors should be best practice.

Throughout the formation of the work plan for the Panel, it was important to remember and understand that members work full time outside of their role as a Councillor.

It was identified that newly elected councillors may require specific training sessions to ensure that basic detail is being provided. It was suggested that a refresher course of training be provided throughout the current term.

Actions for next meeting

- Officers would pull together the current training offer for induction and ongoing training.
- Officers would look at current member training attendance and completion records of trainings.
- There would be an investigation on how a skills audit and training needs analysis could be put together. It would also consider how members can input into the process. This would be brought back alongside some suggested ways forward.
- Details of the current member training budgets in place would be brought back.

7. Future Meeting Dates

The members discussed potential future meeting dates for the Panel, and it was agreed that meetings of the panel would happen quarterly. The Democratic Services Team would review suitable dates, and these would be shared with the Panel.

The Panel were given the choice to either meet in person or hold the meetings online, which would both be streamed to the public. It was agreed that official meetings would be held in person, to facilitate better debate. Any informal meetings to be held in between each quarterly meeting would happen online. The Corporate Management Team would also provide any updates to the panel via email.

It was decided that the next meeting would be held in April.

8. Any other business

The Chair then asked the Panel if there was any other business regarding Member development that they would like to discuss.

It was asked that responses provided by the Council to both Parish and District Councillors are provided within the mandatory 5 working days. Unfortunately, it

could not be guaranteed that emails would be responded to by officers in this time frame, and currently responses were being provided by 8-10 working days.

9. To consider any urgent items.

There were no urgent items identified.

The meeting ended at 19.17

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