

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Thursday, 2nd July, 2015

Present:- Councillor Robert Wallace – in the Chair

Councillors Hambleton, Johnson and Wilkes

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Winfield

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June, 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

3. ICT

Members were advised that the tablets had been received and were being set up. The new Members, elected this year, would be prioritised and training would be given to all.

Members raised a couple of points. Firstly, they stated that the courier service should not have ceased until the tablets had actually been rolled out.

Secondly, the question was asked if mail could be available for collection after lunch rather than after 4.30pm

Resolved: (i) That the information be received.

(ii) That the collection time possibly be reviewed

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PEER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report in connection with the Local Government Associations Peer Review. The Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee had requested that all Committees review the findings. The Panel made the following observations:

Amalgamation of Public Protection and Licensing

There were no views on this as Members were of the understanding that it could not be done.

Amalgamation of Audit and Risk and Standards

Members could not see and relevance in merging these two committees but if it were to go ahead, the structure and timing of meetings would need to be assessed.

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Amalgamation of Active and Cohesive and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees

Members felt that merging these two committees may make the new one too lengthy.

Staffing Committee

Before losing this Committee the scope of the Terms of Reference should be considered. Could it possibly become an ad-hoc committee?

Joint Parking

This was not considered as the Committee had now disbanded.

Conservation Advisory Working Party

Members felt that this Committee needed to remain. If it were to be no longer serviced by the Authority would it still receive officer support? The Conservation and Heritage Officer's knowledge and advice is invaluable.

Members Information Bulletin

Members were in agreement with this and felt that it could be linked into the Members Website once it is up and running.

Report Format and Distribution of Agendas

Members agreed that reports were lengthy and needed addressing. The reports could be shorter and contain links to relevant documents.

Demands on Councillors' time

Members did not feel that the demand on their time, .i.e in attending many meetings, was excessive. A comment was made however on the length of some meetings which could last up to three hours.

Start Time of Meetings

Members were happy for the meetings to remain at 7.00pm start.

Changing the frequency of Elections to 'all-out'

Members felt that this would be advantageous in cost terms. A comment was made regarding the possibility of gaining a totally new Council. A lot of experience could be lost.

Reducing the number of Councillors

Members had no real opinion of this although one Member said that there should be no less than two Members per Ward.

Delegating more decisions to Officers

It was felt that Members should have a greater input into decision making. Councillors are taking on more responsibility in decision making and any bad decisions reflect on the Councillor.

Disbanding the Member Development Panel

Members felt that, in view of the Terms of Reference, this Panel should remain but become more ad-hoc. Three set meetings should still be scheduled for around election time.

Resolved: That the comments be passed to the Chief Executive for collation.

5. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Consideration was given to a report on the Councillors' training programme for 2015/16.

Members were in agreement with the training programme but requested that, for future reference, Chair's training be held as soon as possible after the elections.

Resolved: That the information be received and the comments noted.

6. WORK PLAN

Consideration was given to the Work Plan for the Panel.

Members agreed with the topics set out in the Plan and were also in agreement with looking at a programme for Local Democracy Week.

Resolved: That the information be received and the comments noted.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR ROBERT WALLACE
Chair