

Charter Implementation Group – 7 May 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the **Charter Implementation Group** held on **7 May 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P A Capon

Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr Mrs C A Weston

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr D J Cottis (Independent Member)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, Mrs G A Lucas-Gill and Mrs L Walker.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn.

NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING

Cllr P Beckers and Mr M G Drage.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Fowler - Head of Information and Customer Services
M Power - Committee Administrator

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHARTER FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 MARCH 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2009 were approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SELF ASSESSMENT

Members reviewed the draft EERA Charter for Elected Member Development self-assessment and the following was noted:-

The evidence detailed in the Evidence/Action column would be compiled and a copy placed in the Members' library at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh. This would be continuously updated as we achieved evidence to meet the Charter standard. It was suggested that a column be added to the Action Plan to show progress being made against each item.

The following comments were suggested as additions to the Action Plan:-

Item 1.3 Any Member unable to attend a course run by District Council officers can contact the officer concerned to request a meeting or

Charter Implementation Group – 7 May 2009

briefing on that topic of training (this can be specified in the Member training booklet). Member attendance at a non-scheduled additional training session can be recorded in the attendance figures.

- Item 1.4 The cost of attendance by Standards Committee Members at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees is taken from the £20,000 Member Development budget. Officer time in respect of those courses run by Rochford District Council officers is not re-charged to the Member Development budget.
- Item 1.6 The Peer mentoring facilitated by Improvement East and provided by the IDeA was focussed and portfolio specific. Due to the private nature of the mentoring, it would be inappropriate to involve other Members in the mentoring meetings.
- Item 2.3 In 2006 key descriptions of a number of different Councillor roles were developed, which would assist in planning Member development courses. It was proposed that these role descriptions be updated and brought before the Charter Implementation Group (CIG) for consideration as evidence for this factor. There were terms of reference for each of the Council's Committees and it was agreed that a paragraph stating that each Committee has its own terms of reference should be included in the Charter Action Plan. Details of these terms of reference, together with the agreed role descriptions could be included in the Charter Action Plan to provide a picture of what each Committee is trying to achieve.
- Item 2.4 The CIG will assess the individual training requests contained within the self-assessment questionnaires completed by Members as part of organising the next phase of the Member Development programme in October to November 2009. Any requests would have to be considered within the constraints of the Member development budget. Individual Members who wished to attend courses specific to their role should contact the Head of Information and Customer Services to see if this would be possible within the budget.
- Item 2.5 It was accepted that there will be times when Councillors would be unable to attend all training sessions.
- Item 2.7 It was confirmed that the mentoring of new Councillors was carried out on a group basis. In light of this, it was appreciated that consideration needed to be given on how to organise mentoring for Independent Members. One suggestion was that the other Members in the same ward as the new Councillor could fulfil this role.
- Item 3.6 It was appreciated that inclusion of Independent Members of the Standards Committee in Member Development courses was very

Charter Implementation Group – 7 May 2009

important because of their knowledge of the District. Independent members of the Standards Committee were welcome to attend Council Committee meetings to observe. It should be added to the draft EERA Charter for Elected Member Development self-assessment that Independent Members of the Standards Committee and Parish/Town Councillors were invited to Member training events.

Item 5.2 In response to the suggestion that the Council could investigate the viability of buying the sound equipment used at Area Committee meetings rather than hiring it each time, it was advised that there were issues relating to the need for extra Council staff to operate the system during meetings, as well as storage issues. In response to a comment that there were issues surrounding the quality of sound at Area Committees, it was agreed that the forthcoming Chairmanship training should include the Chairman's responsibility to ensure that members of the public understand meeting procedures and use of the microphones provided.

Item 5.3 Liaison with youth groups in the District was noted, including inviting members of the Youth Council to meetings of full Council. It was also stated that some Councillors had visited schools in the District to hear what young people had to say about local issues. Councillors could also give an overview to school children about what is involved in being a Councillor.

It was suggested that a Member training course on 'people skills' could be included in future training. The Leader of the Council offered to run an 'information' training course on issues relating to the strategic business of the Council (for example, Thames Gateway, East of England Regional Assembly (EERA)) for all Members of the Council.

Subject to the comments above, the self-assessment was endorsed.

The meeting closed at 8.24 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.