

Standards Committee – 16 November 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **16 November 2017** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Vice-Chairman: Cllr J D Griffin

Cllr R R Dray
Cllr D S Efde

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr S Shadbolt

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr Mrs M A Weir

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr M Hoy, Mrs J R Gooding

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs E O K Mason, C M Stanley, P A Beckers, Mrs D A Constable, Mr P Scott and Mrs L Walker.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs D Hoy for Cllr E O K Mason

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bostock - Assistant Director, Democratic Services
M Power - Democratic Services Officer

235 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2017 were agreed as a record and signed by the Chairman.

236 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Democratic Services on adjustments to Member training arrangements in the context of observations made by the Review Committee.

During discussion on the possibility of establishing a Working Group to agree the content of the training programme for the following and each Municipal

Year, it was observed that expertise from Members could be fed into Group appointees.

It was noted that the Standards Committee could decide the terms of reference of a Working Group and require it to report back to the Committee on any matters that would require adjustment to general training policies. It was recognised that establishment of a Working Group could bring flexibility to the process. The Working Group would be in a position to respond at a timely point in the year to Member requests and comments in relation to their training.

Due to the timeline for organising Member training for the 2018/19 Municipal Year the Committee agreed that the Working Group would need to meet in January/February 2018. In future years the Group could meet earlier in the year.

The Committee felt that it would be appropriate for the Working Group to be drawn from Members of the Standards Committee and that it would be useful to have an Independent Person's input, in an advisory capacity. The three Independent Persons would be contacted in this respect, with a view to identifying one Independent Person to ensure consistency of attendance.

It was felt that membership of the Working Group should be across the Council's political Groups, as follows: Cllr Mrs C A Weston as Chairman of the Standards Committee, Cllr Mrs C M Mason, Cllr D S Efde and the agreed Independent Person. Cllr C M Stanley would be approached to ascertain whether he would be the fourth Committee Member of the Working Group.

It was observed that both content and format of Member training could be considered by the Working Group, as well as the option of providing different training for newer/experienced Members. It was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr Mrs D Hoy that the length of training sessions should be determined by the need and nature of the training rather than for a prescribed time and that the Working Group should consider how the differing needs of newer or more experienced Councillors could be accommodated. Induction training for newly elected Members could be included in Working Group considerations. A suggestion that it be a requirement that breaks are built in to each training session could be considered by the Working Group.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs J R Lumley and seconded by Mrs C M Mason that officers undertake a survey of all Members in respect of training requirements/ observations, for submission no later than 1 January 2018, the results of which could be fed into the first meeting of the Working Group. Information from post-course questionnaires held by officers from current and previous years' training courses and input from the Leadership Team on courses that they feel would benefit Members could also be fed into the Working Group.

The Committee agreed that the Working Group could usefully consider redesigning the current post-course survey form and the possibility of providing an on-line version of the form. Consideration of the way that evaluation forms are submitted would also be valuable.

During discussion of existing arrangements relating to mandatory training it was agreed that training content should take account of the different requirements of newer/more experienced Members.

It was felt that the current requirement that Licensing Committee Members attend a mandatory training session each year to be eligible to be Members of both the Licensing Committee and have the ability to sit on Licensing hearings should be adjusted to take account of the fact that the Licensing Committee meets to deal with policy making and so Members do not need necessarily to be trained on the hearings process. It was recognised that Licensing Hearing Sub-Committee Members are drawn from the Licensing Committee and therefore all Members of the Licensing Committee should endeavour to attend the annual training session where possible. The Committee agreed that the requirement should be amended so that those Members who do not attend mandatory Licensing Committee training should be unable to sit on Licensing Hearings but able to be voting Members of the Licensing Committee.

It was further felt that where there has been little change in Licensing law, Members may need an update rather than a full training session each year. It was suggested that the option of bi-annual training be considered to allow a recap of the Licensing hearings process.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Mrs C A Weston that Licensing Committee training should be mandatory only for Members to be able to sit on a Licensing Sub-Committee hearing and that Members could sit on the Licensing Committee without having attended the training.

In respect of Mandatory Planning training, the Committee agreed that the Working Group considers the provision of different training for new Members and existing Members. There should also be consideration of the content of the training offered to ensure that it is appropriate to the needs of the Development Committee.

It was agreed that Appeals Committee training should be mandatory only for Members to be able to sit on an Appeals hearing and that Members could sit on the Appeals Committee without having attended the training and that from the 2018/19 Municipal Year attendance at Appeals Committee training should be mandatory each Municipal Year.

Recommend to the Review Committee for onward recommendation to Full Council

- (1) That a Working Group of the Standards Committee, comprising the Chairman of the Committee, three other cross Group Members and an Independent Person in an advisory capacity, be convened for the purpose of agreeing the content of the Member training programme for the 2018/19 Municipal Year and future years, reporting back to the Standards Committee on any matters that would require adjustment to general training policies. Considerations of the Working Group to include:

- (a) The length of training sessions being determined by the need and nature of the training, rather than for a prescribed and how the differing needs of newer or more experienced Councillors can be accommodated.
 - (b) Information from post-course questionnaires from current and previous year training courses and input from the Leadership Team on courses that they feel would benefit Members.
 - (c) Induction training for newly elected Members.
 - (d) The building in of appropriate breaks within each training session.
 - (e) The design of the current post-course survey form and the possibility of providing an on-line version
 - (f) The way that course evaluation forms are submitted.
- (2) That officers undertake a survey of all Members in respect of their training requirements/observations by no later than 1 January 2018, the results of which can be fed into the first meeting of the Working Group.
- (3) That in relation to mandatory training:
- (a) The requirement to attend mandatory Licensing Committee training each year be mandatory only in respect of enabling Members to sit on Licensing hearings and that Members of the Licensing Committee who do not attend mandatory Licensing Committee training should remain as voting Members of the Licensing Committee.
 - (b) The requirement to attend Appeals Committee training be mandatory for each Municipal Year.
 - (c) The requirement to attend mandatory Appeals Committee training each year be mandatory only in respect of enabling Members to sit on Appeals hearings and that Members of the Appeals Committee who do not attend mandatory Appeals Committee training should remain as voting Members of the Appeals Committee.
 - (d) That the Working Group established under recommendation (1) above include consideration of bi-annual training for Licensing Committee Members to allow revision of matters relating to Licensing Sub-Committee hearings, including Chairmanship.
 - (e) That the Working Group established under recommendation (1) above include consideration of the provision of different training for new and existing Members of the Development Committee and the content of the training offered to ensure that it is appropriate to the needs of the Development Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm.

Chairman

Date

CONFIRMED

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