

Standards Committee – 28 September 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **28 September 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 C M Mason
Cllr C M Stanley

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr P Scott
Mr S Shadbolt

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr P A Beckers
Cllr Mrs D A Constable

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr B T Hazlewood

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E O K Mason, Cllr Mrs M A Weir and Mrs L Walker.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr J R F Mason - Cllr E O K Mason

OFFICERS PRESENT

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

195 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

196 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017/18 – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Democratic Services containing the mid-programme review of the 2017/18 Member Learning and Development Programme.

During discussion, the following was noted:

With reference to the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017, it would have been appropriate for the cost of a venue in the east of the District in which the Parish Council planning training sessions could be held to have been provided prior to arranging the training on 10 October. Apart from the Code of Conduct training, which was well attended, albeit from only seven of the fourteen Parish/Town Councils, there had been low attendance at training courses offered. The Committee aimed to encourage Parish/Town Councils to attend training courses.

It was agreed that in future a separate heading should be included in the report to cover information on briefing sessions to Members from the NHS, Police and Crime Commissioner and other partner organisations, which were outside of the formal training programme. It was noted that such briefing sessions were not funded from the Member training budget.

A Parish Council representative who had undertaken the Safeguarding e-learning training offered to District and Parish/Town Councillors advised that it was both useful and easy to follow and understand. It was requested that a reminder of the availability of the training be sent to those Members who had not completed it, although it was noted that e-learning may not be suitable for some. Assurance was sought that no data was collected or stored when Members undertook this training.

Members requested that the offer of morning sessions as an alternative to evening sessions be extended to mandatory planning training sessions where appropriate.

Attendance at the Treasury Management training this year had been very low and should be offered in future as one session only. The training was Highly Recommended for Members of the Review Committee and, as such, might be best placed under the Review Committee's training programme

It was noted that the opportunity to attend a 'mop-up' session of Licensing Committee training with the Council's Licensing officer had been offered to the two Members who had been unable to complete the mandatory training session arranged for June.

Reference was made to the importance of Members of the Licensing Committee being fully trained to ensure correct decisions are made.

It was noted that non-attendance by a Councillor may be due to family commitments. Some Councillors attend training courses during the course of their employment, which may contribute towards low attendance at some of the Council run courses. The Standards Committee could investigate whether the current system is appropriate and effective.

It was felt that a minimum attendance on courses should be set to ensure training is viable. The Committee agreed that, in respect of non-mandatory

training, where two sessions of training are offered and less than 25% of Members are booked to attend (including Parish/Town Council representatives), officers should consider amalgamating the two and offering just the session that had the greater number of Members booked to attend. The session offered would not necessarily be an evening session and Members would be contacted to advise that only one course would run. In making such a decision, note could be taken of any cancellation policy in respect of an external trainer. For some courses, it may be appropriate to offer just one session of training. If there was subsequently a high demand, a further course could be run later in the year.

The Committee also agreed that, if a Councillor had been unable to attend a scheduled mandatory licensing training session, the option of attendance at Licensing training run by another local authority should be explored. It was noted that there was likely to be a cost associated with this arrangement.

It was noted that a Member who is unable to attend a mandatory training course could make an application to the Standards Committee for dispensation.

Resolved

- (1) That the attendance by Rochford District Councillors at the training courses in Phase 1 of the Programme, as appended to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the content of the training programme to date and the forthcoming opportunities for the remainder of 2017/18 be noted.
- (3) That the offer of morning sessions as an alternative to evening sessions be extended to mandatory planning training sessions where appropriate.
- (4) That in respect of non-mandatory training, where two sessions of training are offered and fewer than 25% of Members (including Parish/Town Council representatives) are booked to attend, officers consider amalgamating the two and running just the session that has the greater number of Members booked to attend. Affected Members to be advised that only one session would run.
- (5) That, where a Councillor has been unable to attend the scheduled mandatory Licensing training session, the option of attendance at Licensing training run by another local authority be explored.

The meeting closed at 8.28 pm.

Chairman

Date

CONFIRMED

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