

Standards Committee – 11 April 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **11 April 2017** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D Merrick
Vice-Chairman: Cllr R R Dray

Cllr D S Efde
Cllr E O K Mason
Cllr C M Stanley

Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr Mrs C A Weston

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr P Scott
Mr S Shadbolt

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr Mrs D A Constable

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr Mrs J R Gooding, Mrs D Hoy, M Hoy, Mrs C M Mason, Mrs L Shaw and A L Williams.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs I Cassar and Mrs L Walker.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr J R F Mason for Cllr Mrs I Cassar
Cllr Mrs M A Weir (Parish designate Member) for Cllr Mrs L A Vingoe

OFFICERS PRESENT

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

78 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs R R Dray, D S Efde, C M Stanley and M J Steptoe each declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 of the Agenda, Member Learning and Development 2017/18, by virtue of respective memberships of Rayleigh Town Council, Great

Wakering Parish Council, Rawreth Parish Council and Barling Magna Parish Council.

80 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2017/18

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Democratic Services on the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme 2017/18.

It was agreed that the requirement for training in respect of the Development Committee be confirmed as follows: 'That Members of the Committee or those Members wishing to substitute at Development Committee meetings must not miss two consecutive training sessions of mandatory training of the three that are offered each year and that this requirement be on a 'rolling' basis from one year to the following year'.

There was discussion on whether existing course timings, that is, an afternoon and evening session for the majority of courses, should be retained, or whether there should be the option of holding courses at different times of the day. It was agreed that, where it is usually provided, an evening session be retained in recognition that Members who work would not easily be able to attend sessions held during the day. Commencing the evening course at 7 pm instead of 7.30 pm was considered but it was felt that this may be too early for working Councillors, notwithstanding that it was important that evening courses should finish no later than 10 pm. Three sessions a day would be very costly and, therefore, not a viable option.

It was felt that it would be useful for some morning sessions to be offered as an alternative to afternoon sessions for in-house training, an arrangement that may not be appropriate for courses where external trainers were used due to the cost and distance travelled. This arrangement could be trialled in 2017/18 and its success, and any resultant improvement in attendance rates, reviewed after a year.

It was recognised that all mandatory training should go ahead irrespective of the number of Members booked to attend.

Some concern was expressed that holding mandatory Licensing Committee training during the day could exclude those Councillors who worked from membership of the Committee due to their being unable to attend the training. A cost effective option could be to hold an evening training session for the Licensing Committee jointly with another Council. It was noted that Licensing Committee meetings and Licensing Hearings were held in the day. Consideration would be given to evening Committee meetings wherever practicable.

The Committee endorsed a motion, moved by Cllr M J Steptoe and seconded by Cllr Mrs C A Weston, that existing evening training sessions be retained but that the second session be scheduled for either the morning or afternoon, subject to trainer availability and at the officers' discretion based on

practicalities. It was noted that morning sessions would commence at 9.30 am and finish no later than 12 noon; this arrangement to apply to all training, including mandatory planning training.

There was discussion on the cost to the Council of funding individual attendance at external conferences/training and the detail of the Members who had attended such events during 2016/17. It was confirmed that future reports to the Committee would provide details of which Members had applied for such funding and the total cost to the Council.

In considering the proposal that an elearning module in Safeguarding – Level One be offered to all Members, and available for use on the iPad or PC, it was noted that:

- The possibility of the module being available on DVD/CD or memory stick would be investigated.
- The module had been completed by Rochford District Council staff and would be available shortly to be rolled out to Members. The module would be available also to Parish/Town Councils at no cost.

It was agreed that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee on possible options for pursuing the suggestions from the Parish/Town Councils on the delivery of the training bespoke to them.

Resolved

- (1) That the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2016/17, as appended to the officer report, be received and that Members of the Development Committee, or those Members wishing to substitute at Development Committee meetings, must not miss two consecutive training sessions of mandatory Development Committee training of the three that are offered each year and that this requirement be on a rolling basis from one year to the following year.
- (2) That the proposals for the content of the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2017/18, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.12 of the report, be endorsed.
- (3) That where it is usually provided an evening training session be retained but that the second session be scheduled for either the morning or afternoon, subject to trainer availability and at the officers' discretion based on practicalities; the morning session to commence at 9.30 am and finish no later than 12 noon. This arrangement to apply to all training, including mandatory planning, and trialled in 2017/18, so that its success and any improvement in attendance rates can be reviewed after a year.
- (4) That future reports provide details on which Members had applied as individuals for funding to attend external conferences/training and the total

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cost to the Council.

- (5) That the Safeguarding – Level One elearning module be offered to all Members.
- (6) That a communication be sent from the Committee to Group Leaders asking that they emphasise to their Members the benefit of maximum attendance at highly recommended Member training courses.
- (7) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee on possible options for pursuing the suggestions from the Parish/Town Councils on the delivery of the training bespoke to them.

The meeting closed at 9.19 pm.

Chairman

Date

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