
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Held on Thursday, 26 September 2013 at 11.00 am in
Dereham Room, Conference Suite, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr M J Nairn
Mr T R Carter (Chairman)
Mr S.G. Bambridge

Mr K.S. Gilbert
Mr T. J. Jermy

In Attendance

Ruth Hassall
Leanne Neave
Teresa Smith

- HR Manager
- Member Trainer
- Committee Officer

Action By

24/13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

25/13 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Mr Robinson.

26/13 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

27/13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

28/13 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman requested an update on the Member / Officer pledge. The Member Trainer said that one week of sessions had taken place. 15-20 Officers who had not received the training would be attending a wash-up session shortly.

All Officers were thoroughly engaged and agreed on the importance of the process. The sessions highlighted areas in which individuals could improve communications between an Officer and ward Member.

The Member Trainer asked for feedback from the Panel on their views on how to deliver to Members.

Action By

It was suggested that a short training session could be held following Full Council and delivered by either a senior officer, or a member of the training team.

Members agreed they were happy for the training team to deliver the briefing.

Mr Bambridge asked if the pledge incorporated Capita staff and other employees who whilst not employed by the Council were providing a service on behalf of the Council.

The Chairman said that as Capita was a main point of contact with Members he would speak with the Leader of the Council regarding progressing the pledge with them.

29/13 FINANCE REPORT

The Member Trainer presented the Finance Report and informed Members that the current expenditure was at £3700 which included the Leadership Training and Charter Plus.

She advised Members that the cost of the Leadership Course had been negotiated this year by William Nunn with the cost being £1200 for three members rather than the amount charged last year which was £1200 for one member.

Mr Bambridge informed the panel that he hoped he had secured outside funding to attend the Drainage Board Conference in November.

30/13 CHARTER PLUS SELF ASSESSMENT

The Member Trainer informed the Panel the assessment date was planned for 21 November 2013. Assessors would look at portfolios that had been prepared and in addition would interview Members. It was likely that Leaders of each group would be interviewed, together with the Member Development Panel. Other Members would also be interviewed and would be selected at random.

The formal certificate had been received and formally signed.

The Member Trainer had now received 91% return on the Personal Development Plans. In October there would be a 6-month review to ensure actions were taking place. It was suggested that those who had training requests on their PDP's were contacted to ensure relevant training had either taken place or had been booked. A courtesy letter would be sent to those that had not requested training to ask if training needs had changed.

Action By

Mr Bambridge said Members who were on Committees such as Licensing, Appeals and Planning should be made to undertake the appropriate training.

The Member Trainer said she would attend the next Full Council meeting to pass individuals PDP questionnaires for completion.

Mr Nairn suggested Members should be named and shamed if they did not attend training. If a Member was on a specialist committee it should be made clear to them that they were required to undertake specialist training.

Mr Gilbert highlighted that in the Charter Plus self-assessment document it suggested PDP returns should be 60%. The Member Trainer said that following previous achievements which were over 80% return rate, a target of 90% had been set for the Charter plus.

Mr Gilbert asked if portfolio holders had undertaken training. The Member Trainer said several members were on the Leadership programme and had also attended Planning and Financial training. However, it was noted that for some portfolio members training was not available.

31/13 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL FOR SOCIAL MEDIA UNCONFERENCE

The HR Manager apologised to members for the confusion in that it was understood the Social Media unconference was part of the Digital Strategy that had not been agreed. As a consequence, the Communications Manager had understood that Social Media unconference would not be going forward in the proposed format but this had not been communicated to the Member Trainer.

Therefore, the HR Manager, Member Trainer and Communications Manager had discussed how this could be taken forward.

Alternative suggestions were to use online training where a narrator would talk over powerpoint notes, or to break down different elements of Social Media and deliver as a conference for members to choose subjects to attend.

Mr Nairn confirmed that training on Social Media was essential as there were so many pitfalls and that if a Member was on Twitter they were being followed by the Media.

The HR Manager said that people forgot Social Media, such as Facebook, was shared. That had led to a rise in disciplinary's. She asked for the Panels views on delivering a programme either in a traditional way, or online.

Action By

Mr Nairn said that to do something online might be boring and that interaction was far better. It allowed mistakes to be highlighted, encouragement from others and self confidence to be built. Therefore a forum would be the better approach.

The Chairman said it was fun to do things together, as individuals learnt from each other. He also mentioned that something similar was delivered two years ago, which the Communications Manager did and worked really well and more importantly was fun.

Mr Bambridge said training on social media was just as essential as training for legal committees. He suggested that every councillor should do it.

The Member Trainer asked for specific topics to be covered, which were the Web Page, Twitter, Skype, Facebook, Blog, and an e-newsletter. She would set out a plan for the day for approval by the Member Development Panel. It was asked that it was not the same person delivering all day, and perhaps members could be involved in the delivery, especially those that already used Social Media to its full potential.

Mr Jermy suggested that a newsletter could be uploaded onto a Member's own page within the website to keep the public aware of what the Councillor was doing.

The Chairman asked for the session to take place towards the end of November.

32/13 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 28 November 2013 were noted.

Mr Bambridge added that he had attended a Faith Seminar recently informing Members on how to interact with different Faith areas which would help particularly when dealing with the community and for when Members entered election campaigning. He would find out more information and bring it to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.10 pm

CHAIRMAN