
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Held on Thursday, 16 March 2017 at 10.00 am in
Dereham Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr I. Sherwood (Chairman)
Mrs E J Bishop
Mr P. R. W. Darby

Mr M J Nairn
Mr H. E. J. Clarke (substitute)

Also Present

Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr P. Wilkinson

In Attendance

Anthony Hodson-Curran - Councillor Development Co-ordinator
Leanne Neave - Democratic Service Officer

Action By

10/17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January were agreed as a correct record.

11/17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Terry Jermy, Harry Clarke attended in his absence.

12/17 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no matters of Urgent Business.

13/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

14/17 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Lynda Turner and Peter Wilkinson.

15/17 BTS TRAINING PROGRAMME

Richard Wills Managing Director, Breckland Training Services (BTS) presented the proposed member training programme for 2017-18.

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A Training needs analysis had been carried out with Members in July 2017, an 80% return was achieved. This analysis looked at the needs of Members now and in the future.

He explained that New Members Induction was identified as an area for development. BTS's proposal included potential items to include "How do you define the role of a Councillor?" and "Setting the scene to date", this gives new members some background history to Breckland and a who's who.

A discussion took place regarding the suggested courses to be included in the Training Programme.

The Chairman thanked Richard for the proposal stating an evidence based programme was useful.

LT stated the Induction programme hit the mark far better than previous years. She commented that Members need to understand the "basics" when they are elected and the complexities of being a Councillor.

PD suggested it would be useful for new Members to have clarity over areas of responsibilities as Districts remit was very different to that of County or Town and Parish.

The Chairman agreed this was a valid point.

PW pointed out that at the previous "Basic IT" course only 3 members attended.

The Chairman felt with a catchment of 49, three attendees was acceptable.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised there were three benefits apparent to him;

- Planning early on the Induction is beneficial to ensure its right
- It gives an opportunity to look at joint working with South Holland as the previous Induction had a joint purpose
- There is a commercial opportunity to make money by offering service to other Councils all looking to run an Induction Programme following Election.

The Chairman questioned if the Courses/Induction Programme were held close to Kings Lynn would many of our Members travel to it?

AHC confirmed it was not suggested that the sessions be joined up but the programme as a whole, each running independently.

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JB commented that the Licensing training worked well as joined up sessions. She believed what was listed in Item 3 "The core skills of a Councillor" was good however it needed to include sessions on Housing and ARP, she believed these were more valuable to Members than speed reading or problem solving.

LT agreed and suggested Planning was also needed.

HC agreed stating as a new member you received a lot of things, skills training was required but knowledge of "common" things he felt took priority. He also commented that a buddy or mentor was very useful.

LT confirmed that that Mentor training was offered to all Members prior to the 2015 election.

The Managing Director of BTS advised Individual modules would run alongside the normal programme. He confirmed the training programme would remain the same for 3 years. The courses were "stepping stones", something new would be added into each course year on year so skills in each course would evolve over the 3 years.

The Chairman commented that the findings needed to be remembered, trainers were needed to deliver sessions not "experts" in that field.

The Managing Director of BTS confirmed that the programme could be moulded year on year to reflect the needs of Local Authorities. It also looked at future needs, "how do you prepare to be a 21st Century Member".

The Chairman advised he was pleased with the "Councillor of the future", society had changed tremendously and subjects such as dementia, homosexuality, mental health and gender were not talked about as much as they should be. There was the need for awareness of these issues to be included in the programme to keep up with the changing society.

LT advised as a Local Authority we had a bigger responsibility regarding Health and Wellbeing that included Domestic Abuse.

MN agreed saying it was a matter of Social Care, Members needed to be aware that some residents would have these issues.

The Chairman advised he was pleased to see personal resilience on the programme. He thanked the Managing Director of BTS for the report and confirmed it had achieved what he had hoped.

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The Managing Director of BTS left the meeting.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator confirmed that the programme designed by BTS was an accurate reflection of the TNA carried out. It showed clear links to the corporate priorities and those of Members. It forms a strong base for what was hoped to achieve and was seen as a skills for life/ skills for work programme. He believed it should be a certificated programme. He advised as the TNA was carried out in summer of 2016 the programme would not run in its entirety due to election in 2019. He advised the panel should look at choosing which courses they would like delivered in the following 18months. He confirmed the 3 year programme would commence post Election 2019.

The Chairman believed the focus should be on the Induction 2019 to ensure it was better than previous years. He suggested the Councillor Development Co-ordinator look at the most useful sessions to deliver.

AHC

16/17 MEMBERSHIP

The Councillor Development-Co-ordinator presented the report. It was suggested that the membership to the panel be open to all Members and for newly elected Members to immediately get involved. The size of the panel should be no more than 9 but enough members were needed to engage in a debate. Suggested composition of Panel was:

- Chairman – elected at first Council
- Vice Chairman – elected at first Council
- Majority group – no more than two thirds
- Opposition – minimum of two
- Most recent intake – minimum of two, one majority one opposition
- Twin/Triple Hat – minimum of two

LT believed that as a panel there should be little emphasis on politics. She felt it was more important the members represented each councillor, newly elected, long serving etc.

JB queried how many Members knew about Member Development Panel. The need was for people who wanted to be involved being a member of the Panel.

The Chairman confirmed the panel should be open to all Members. However there was a need for a “core” list of Members. He felt there was validity in the Membership proposal but not 100% on the composition. He believed all parties, groups and independents should be invited to nominate a representative. He

	<u>Action By</u>
<p>asked if Councillor Development Co-ordinator could write a proposal for Cabinet.</p> <p>The Councillor Development-Co-ordinator clarified the wishes of the Panel.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No more than nine members including Chairman and Vice-Chairman2. Chairman and Vice Chairman elected at Annual Meeting of the Council3. All non-Executive / Chairing Councillors asked to express interest to the Chairman4. Chairman selects from the expressions of interest5. MDP to invite any further Councillors needed to ensure representative and appropriate membership6. MDP to elect successor chairman / vice-chairman from membership if necessary7. Ensure that newly elected Councillors are encouraged and supported to join	<p>AHC</p>
<p>The Chairman requested Councillor Development-Co-ordinator submit the proposal to the Portfolio Holder.</p>	<p>AHC</p>
<p><u>17/17 TERMS OF REFERENCE</u></p>	
<p>The Councillor Development Co-ordinator presented the Terms of Reference Proposal. It was noted that point 4 under Description and Membership be amended when Membership proposal had been agreed.</p>	
<p>The Chairman requested the Portfolio holder be invited to the next meeting to give his view on Terms of Reference and Membership proposals. He confirmed he was happy with the Terms of Reference Proposal.</p>	<p>LN</p>
<p>It was requested that both documents be sent to the Chairman before coming back to the Panel.</p>	<p>AHC</p>

Action By

18/17 CHARTER PLUS ACTION PLAN

The Chairman queried the arrangements for the presentation at Council.

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the Chairman of EELGA Tom Fitzpatrick would be attending to present the award. A press release would follow.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator presented the improvement plan.

The Chairman advised a question had been raised as to the validity of Charter Plus. He strongly believed Charter Plus made the Council do what they were supposed to do in terms of Member Development. He suggested a discussion could be had with the Portfolio Holder at the next meeting.

MN felt Charter Plus was the most valuable audit of what the Member Development Panel and the Council did in terms of Member Development. Without it there would be no measure of what was done. The assessment confirms as a Council what is needed to be done is done and it was being done well.

JB agreed. To be in the top 3 performing Councils in SEEMP assessing area was a great achievement and fantastic news.

PW pointed out it was a kite mark to external bodies to encourage them to work with Breckland Council.

LT commented that it demonstrated the value put into Members which is a plus point for new Members.

HC agreed. He felt it was important for current Members and new potential Members, he was 100% behind Charter Plus.

PD stated it showed Breckland was striving to be a better council. It gives a benchmark and is something electors can see and know the Council are committed to developing Members.

The Chairman queried how much Charter Plus cost.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised it was a £3000 one off payment. With additional expenses for the assessment team on the day of assessment, once every three years. There was a Councillor training budget of £10,500 per annum. There was a need to look at value for money. BTS addressed the needs of Members and developed a focussed training programme. If there were not the disciplines of Charter Plus in place the Panel could be overrun by individual requests for training.

Action By

19/17 LOCAL DEMOCRACY - COUNCIL TAKEOVER DAY

The Democratic Services Officer gave a verbal update regarding the Council Takeover day event for High Schools.

This formed part of the Local Democracy Programme. Four schools were participating in the event with a total of five teams submitted. Each team would become the Cabinet of Breckland District Council. A number of issues, tasks for completion, meetings with the Chief Executive, calls from constituents and producing a community newsletter demonstrated to the students the many different aspects of being a Councillor. Each team had a Member mentor giving advice and sharing experiences.

This was the first time this event had been delivered, the initial idea and design had been discussed with BTS who would deliver the event. It was hoped that if successful BTS could market the product to other Councils and links to the National Take Over Day in November could be made.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised that this event would not happen without Charter Plus as it was an area identified through the assessment process.

20/17 NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 11th May, 10am Dereham Room Elizabeth House Dereham.

Due to a fire alarm evacuation there was a break in the meeting.
The meeting closed at 12.15 pm

CHAIRMAN