
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Held on Thursday, 10 November 2016 at 10.00 am in
Dereham Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE**

PRESENT

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

Also Present

Mrs L. S. Turner (LT)

In Attendance

Anthony Hodson-Curran (AHC) - Councillor Development Co-ordinator
Leanne Neave (LN) - Member Trainer

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45/16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September were agreed as a correct record.

46/16 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Robinson, Nairn and Jermy

47/16 URGENT BUSINESS

None

48/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

49/16 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillor Lynda Turner

50/16 COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/18-2021/22

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator presented the report. He explained the figures were from a zero based exercise and the last 18 months real experience had been used to form the forward plan 2016-2019. Historically at year end there had been a surplus budget and going forward this should be avoided. He confirmed that the reserve was to be used over a 3 year period, to support the transformation and

digitilisation programme. It was noted the arrangement with BTS was cost recovery and the cost increased from £5,500 p/a to £22,000 p/a. should they become external.

Due to the large cost per person the Chairman expressed a wish for the benefits of the Leadership training at Warwick to be looked at by the Panel.

LT advised she had attended Warwick and feedback had never been sought from delegates. She believed it was not value for money.

The Chairman requested a copy of the programme to better understand what was offered.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised there was no cheaper alternative offered by the LGA and in his opinion the current programme offered good quality content and opportunities for networking. He pointed out that there had been more delegates attend the Leadership course in the last 18 months due to the election and changes to the Cabinet.

The Chairman thanked the Councillor Development Co-ordinator for the plan and whilst in support of the plan he felt it needed to be presented in a clearer manner.

Member Development Co-ordinator advised the discussion points would be fed back to the Democratic Services Manager.

LT advised that 1-1 training had been discussed at length at Group Meeting as Members were at different learning levels.

PD emphasised the need for additional training should the Council move to I-pads for Members.

The panel agreed option 2.3 "to suggest alternative allocation for resources against the programme previously considered on this Agenda".

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AHC

AHC

AHC

51/16 LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

The Member Trainer detailed the events held during Local Democracy Week. A political speed dating event had been held for 15 and 16 years olds. 10 Members attended to answer quick fire questions put to them by the students. Each member was scored on a variety of skills. Feedback received from Students, Teachers and Members had been very positive. With slight adjustment the session could be rolled out to schools and local community groups at their site.

A 'being a Councillor' evening was also held, despite a low turnout those that attended were keen to stand as District Councillors and took a lot from the session. Members who formed the panel and those that attended in support were thanked. Filmed interviews of Members had

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been available for the week on the Breckland website and Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Meetings were streamed on Facebook.

The Chairman thanked the Member Trainer for a successful week of events. He felt Local democracy Week had fallen off the National radar and was keen for us to continue to deliver it.

The Member Trainer advised another event would be delivered in early 2017 that saw 15 and 16 year olds taking over a fictitious council. A very similar event to the Local Government Challenge.

LT advised that as a Governer of her local school she attended a pre-Ofsted meeting, where the Origins of Democracy session had been highlighted as an event children were still talking about and were very complimentary about it.

52/16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator confirmed the Performance Management Framework was linked to the budget. There was a need to have a set of measures to evaluate training.

Four areas are looked at;

- What are we doing?
- Is it value for money?
- Are we meeting needs?
- Are we looking for improvement?
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The Chairman advised he was comfortable with the measures however he believed “cost per head” was not an important factor. He emphasised he was not in favour of cancelling courses due to low numbers as those in attendance benefitted from attending and therefore it was value for money. He would not want to see any importance attached to “cost per head” figure.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator explained the “cost per head” figure was a benchmarking figure used as a comparison to other councils. He pointed out that four delegates represented 10% of members.

JB believed training for housing, planning and benefits were essential as these areas formed a large part of casework.

The Member Trainer confirmed there had been a training session on Universal Credit when it was introduced, delivered by the Training Officer at ARP but further sessions could be arranged.

LT suggested Safeguarding and Code of Conduct training should be compulsory for new Councillors. She recalled Diversity training had been previously.

AHC confirmed feedback from training would provide the data for the matrix and most were measured quarterly.

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The Chairman confirmed the panel were happy with the proposal.

53/16 COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator presented the a training programme based on the assessment carried out by Breckland Training Services (BTS)

The Chairman drew the panels attention to pages 26 and 27 highlighting the event delivery. He felt the timing of events was crucial to numbers attending.

JB queried if morning events had been considered.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised the twilight courses would continue but sessions would be offered at different times and in different locations around the district.

The Chairman was pleased to see four 'themes' and he felt this was an easy concept to understand.

PD queried if the opportunity for inviting other Local Authorities to training had been explored.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator advised a staggered invitation approach had been implemented so Town and Parish Councillors were invited if places had not been filled by Members. Licensing training had been delivered in Kings Lynn and was shared with Members from South Holland Council. It was possible for other Local Authorities to be invited and further research would be carried out.

The Chairman supported 'standard' courses as he felt these were necessary. He asked for clarification on the Digital Passport.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator explained it was an online learning platform for Officers of which three modules had gone live. The system was delivered by HR and IT, and championed through the Digital Champions. Digital Passports were the beginnings of digital working and the first modules were relevant for Members.

The Chairman was happy with Digital Passport for Members.

LT queried when Safeguarding would be rolled out.

The Councillor Development Co-ordinator confirmed it would be 2017 and linked to Resilience training.

The Chairman welcomed Personal Resilience had been included and thanked the Councillor Development Co-ordinator for the programme.

JB highlighted the need for appropriate delivery, particularly with Resilience training. If Members felt patronised it might affect delegate numbers on future courses.

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The Councillor Development Co-ordinator pointed out that the Council had to deliver a foundation level so Members could be confident. He agreed that specific courses such as planning and housing professional trainers would be used with technical support from experts in the field.

PD requested training in dealing with difficult casework as delivering bad news was a challenge.

The Member Trainer confirmed a 'Challenging Situations' Course would be delivered on 13th December 2016.

54/16 FORWARD PLAN

This item was not discussed and would be carried forward to the next agenda.

55/16 NEXT MEETING

The date of future meetings will be confirmed.

LN

The meeting closed at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN