

Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution

A meeting of Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution was held on Monday, 31st January, 2011.

Present: Cllr Terry Laing (Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook (vice Cllr Mrs Cains), Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Ken Lupton.

Officers: N.Hart, Mrs J.McGeeney, Mrs M.Waggott (LD).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Submitted on behalf of Cllrs Mrs Apedaile, Mrs Cains and Noble.

MAP 1/10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest declared.

MAP 2/10 **Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members 2011 - 2014**

Consideration was given to the proposed Learning & Development Strategy for Members for 2011-2015.

The strategy had been refreshed following its initial approval in 2006 and included new initiatives since this time including the development of a 'Emember Support System'; the introduction of monthly Member Policy Update sessions with a forward plan for future topics to be considered; introduction of CRB checks for members, and the provision of additional training/soundbite sessions covering new areas of policy, procedure and legislation.

Feedback obtained from new members in 2007 had also been heavily influential in shaping the structure of the proposed Members Induction programme post elections in May 2011. The revised programme, as well as being less intensive, included a mix of presentations regarding key functional areas, a tour of the main offices and the Borough, a new 'market stall' type event where each department could showcase their service in an engaging way as possible, and a 'Drop In' day for members to visit Democratic Services and Member ICT support.

In addition to the information provided during induction, members would continue to be provided with a Members Handbook summarising the main service areas and contacts likely to be of interest to them, and this would now include specific profile information regarding their own ward and a new 'Top Tips' booklet intended to provide a quick reference guide for members of helpful information to assist them in their initial days in office and prior to identifying their future training needs.

The proposed revised strategy would form the cornerstone of the Authorities application for Charter Plus Status in respect of the Member Development service scheduled for October 2011.

In endorsing the strategy, members made reference to the benefits to be gained for all Chairs and Vice Chairs to receive advice and training regarding protocols

and procedures in chairing the different types of meetings held.

AGREED that:-

1. The comments of the Members Advisory Panel be noted.
2. The Director of Law & Democracy be authorised to further develop the strategy for consideration by Cabinet.

**MAP
3/10**

MAP Forward Plan

Members were advised of the suggested future workload of the Panel reflecting necessary preparations post elections and issues emerging from the recent EIT Review of Democratic Services, approved by Cabinet on the 16th December 2010:-

-January 2011

Member Learning & Development Strategy
Forward Plan

-February 2011

Conference/Seminar Attendance by both Members and Staff
AGM 2011 and beyond
Ordinary Council Meetings

-March 2011

Venues for Ward Surgeries
Consultation Concordat for Elected Members
IT Support/Advancements-Update

Members made reference to the need for the review of Council meetings to include consideration of arrangements for Member Questions and for any suggested revision of ward surgery arrangements to include consultation with ward members.

Members also referred to the difficulties experienced when trying to gain access to meeting facilities away from the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings, as well the often poor acoustics in some venues. It was noted that work was soon to commence on the refurbishment of the Stockton Central Library, which included works to provide a new Lecture Hall facility in the Ground Floor area of the Municipal Buildings. In view of members previous concerns regards adequate meeting facilities, the Head of Democratic Services had had input to the specifications of the planned work so that the new facility would include appropriate audio and visual equipment built into the room and with the facility for some of the audio equipment to be portable and therefore used in other

Council meeting facilities. Works on the new Lecture Hall were due to commence this month, but the existing Lecture Hall facility would continue to be available and be used until such time as the new facility was complete.

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted and items be brought for the attention of this Panel as indicated.