

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2022

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors R Mallender (Chairman), G Dickman, A Phillips, K Shaw,
G Williams, C Jeffreys and J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack
E Richardson

Service Manager - Corporate Services
Democratic Services Officer

ABSENT:

Councillors B Buschmann and M Gaunt

24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 May 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022 were approved and signed
by the Chairman.

26 Single Sign On for Training

The ICT Project and Development Officer led the group through a
demonstration of the Single Sign-On for Members e-learning.

27 Councillor Training - Update

The Service Manager Corporate Services presented her report providing an
update on Councillor Training.

The Service Manager Corporate Services explained that the report formed part
of a twice yearly update to the Group and set out the current position of training
completed by Members, including for the mandatory training sessions such as
licencing and planning which had now been completed. She explained that due
to the death of Her Majesty the Queen, Risk Management Training had been
rearranged and that that, along with Code of Conduct and Treasury
Management Training, were scheduled to take place shortly.

The Group was informed that Single Sign-On for e-learning had been trialled
and following the successful demonstration with Members of the Group at the

start of this meeting, it was planned to now roll this out to all Councillors. The Single Sign-On link could be found on the front page of the Members Intranet and Councillors simply needed to click on the link to take them directly to their e-learning account where all available training would be listed.

The Service Manager Corporate Services explained that the aim of the Single Sign-On was to make it easier for Councillors to access training and for it to act as a reminder of what had been completed and what was outstanding. The system would also send notification emails to Members to let them know of e-learning courses that they were due to complete, with a link taking them to their e-learning account. She asked for Members to report any difficulties experienced and highlighted that the alternative to e-learning would be in-person training which had cost and time commitments. She said that the Council would circulate individual training records to all Members shortly.

The Chairman referred to anecdotal feedback from Councillors that they had previously had difficulty finding the training system and therefore thought that the Single Sign-On access, with the reminder system, would be a great help, particularly for training which required regular refreshment such as GDPR. The Chairman encouraged Members of the Group to feed this back to Councillor colleagues to hopefully lead to an increase in training completed.

In relation to bringing in sanctions for uncompleted training, Members of the Group thought that this wouldn't be necessary and suggested that it could be more for Chairs and Vice Chairs to encourage uptake for their relevant Committee members. The Group also hoped that the Single Sign-on in itself would help with completion rates.

Councillor J Wheeler suggested that Councillors not be allowed to sit on committees until they had completed the training required for that committee and highlighted the importance of mandatory training, such as GDPR for accessing emails, as potentially something that the Information Commissioner would look at if there were a data breach. He suggested that election candidates be pre-notified that completion of basic and mandatory training would be required of them if elected as a Councillor next year.

In relation to training completed elsewhere, including at the County Council and through employers and external organisations, Members of the Group asked whether this would count towards their Borough Council training record. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that it could as some training was universal, such as GDPR, and said that Members just needed to provide certification of completion. She explained that the Borough Council was working with the County Council to share training information, and whilst there were differences in some training which meant that they needed to be completed separately at both organisations, such as for planning, much would be transferrable.

Councillor Williams referred to training completed externally and noted that it may have differences in content to that of the Council. The Service Manager Corporate Services agreed but said that the Council took a pragmatic approach in trusting that external training resulting in a certificate would be at a sufficiently high level to cover necessary information.

The Chairman thought that good engagement in training meant that Councillors completed the minimum level required for the committees on which they sat, and then progressed to complete training on other useful topics and for other committees, for example planning training was useful for engagement with residents and commenting on applications.

Councillor Williams asked whether external training would also feed into the e-learning system to show as completed there so as not to trigger reminders. He also questioned whether display screen equipment training was essential for Councillors as they often did not sit at a desk for long periods of time.

Councillor Williams asked whether external training completed but not specified in the Council's list of courses could be recognised and listed in Councillor's training records, such as CPR training. The Chairman confirmed that the Council did recognise external training certificates.

Councillor Jeffreys referred to changes in language and said that it would be helpful to have guidance about the appropriateness and inappropriateness of some words, so as not to cause offence. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that inclusive language guidance for officers was currently being prepared, which would be used to create a guide for Councillors. The Council was looking at providing more involved equality and diversity training and also to incorporate information into the Councillor induction training about public speaking and making speeches.

The Chairman referred also to Local Government speak and the use of acronyms which were not always readily understood by residents. He agreed that the connotations of language needed to be understood, including how to address people and Committee Chairs as people had differing preferences.

Members of the Group thought that in-person training courses needed to be delivered with passion to keep people engaged.

The Chairman asked that Members of the Group contact Officers if they had any additional feedback following the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the Member Development Group:

- a) discussed the information provided by officers in relation to Councillor Learning and Development
- b) suggested any actions or ideas they may have in relation to Councillor Learning and Development which would address the concerns raised by officers through the report.

28 **Draft 2023 Councillor Induction Programme**

The Service Manager Corporate Services referred to the induction process for newly elected Councillors, and specifically the Councillor's Handbook which set out all of the basic information that a Councillor needed to know immediately upon election. She confirmed that the Council was proposing to keep the handbook and asked if Members of the Group would support that decision and

if they had any feedback about content.

Members of the Group agreed that the handbook was useful and that the Council should continue to provide it. Members of the Group asked whether it would be available online, and also how a candidate could get it if they did not attend the count to receive it at that point. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that a physical copy would be handed out to Councillors at the count and whilst it was unusual for a candidate to not attend, a copy could be emailed or posted to them if required. The content of the handbook would also be replicated on the Members extranet. The Group suggested that it would be helpful to have a pdf version of the handbook also.

The Service Manager Corporate Services reflected that the 2019 training schedule had included twelve face-to-face training sessions over a seven week period and had been hard for officers and Councillors, and had ultimately resulted in a drop off in attendance. Members of the Group echoed those sentiments and thought that it had involved a lot of time and travel commitment and questioned whether the new programme could include online and hybrid training and also whether information could be uploaded onto the Members Extranet.

The Service Manager Corporate Services referred to proposals for the 2023 induction programme as set out in the report, which included three sessions. The first session proposed was an evening drop-in session where Councillors could meet officers and other Councillors and complete essential paperwork and find out key information; Session One – Admin and Logistics. Session Two would be an all-day Saturday session covering fundamental information about the work of a council and what it was to be a Councillor; Session Two – The Fundamentals. Session Three would be an exhibition style evening session providing information about the wider work of the Council, including partner organisations and big scheme projects; Session Three – The bigger Picture.

Councillor Jeffreys said that it was essential that returning Councillors attend these sessions to engage with and support the new Councillors. Members of the Group also suggested that new Councillors be reminded to speak to their employer about having flexibility to attend to Council business and asked whether training sessions could be recorded so that Councillors who both were and weren't able to attend could use them as a learning resource.

Members of the Group supported the three session schedule and the breakdown of information into three discreet events, including having a drop-in session where Councillors could meet with colleagues.

Members of the Group thought that informing candidates of the dates ahead of the election would be helpful so that they could hold those dates in their diaries. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed the expectation that newly elected Councillors would make themselves available to attend these sessions. If there was circumstance where attendance wasn't possible then alternative provision would be made.

The Service Manager Corporate Services referred to the proposed training schedule and explained that information previously contained within the initial

induction programme had now been moved into the medium term programme, which would commence after the induction training had concluded. She explained that key training, such as planning and licensing, had been front loaded for early completion and in readiness for the commencement of committee and Full Council meetings.

The Service Manager Corporate Services explained the much of the training would be run internally, supported by training offered by East Midlands Councils where appropriate.

Councillor Jeffreys thought that the inclusion of training on Motions was very important and the Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that the Council had well developed training in place.

The Service Manager Corporate Services referred to proposals for the longer-term training programme which included some information being provided through written and how-to documentation or short videos where a Councillor demonstrated how to do something, rather than an in-person training session.

The Chairman opened discussion about Members of this Group being involved in training videos to share experience and knowledge, which could be created ahead of the elections. Members of the Group supported the use of written and videos training, including how to access and use the planning system.

Councillor Williams asked about scrutiny training and the Service Manager Corporate Services explained that the Council had provided much training on scrutiny over recent years, and it was included as part of the medium-term programme, which could be expanded on if and as required.

The Chairman said that there was a role for political groups and experienced Councillors to support and explain the workings of the Council to new Councillors. The Service Manager Corporate Services said that Councillors sharing information and speaking positively about the training programme would support learning.

It was RESOLVED that the Member Development Group:

- a) discussed the proposals that officers had put forward for the 2023 Induction Programme.
- b) put forward any ideas or suggestions to officers at the meeting to increase councillor engagement in the Induction Programme.

The meeting closed at 7:20pm

CHAIRMAN