

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP
MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area A, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors D Soloman (Chair), M Barney, T Birch, T Combellack, R Mallender,
A Phillips, D Polenta and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack

Service Manager - Corporate
Services

T Coop

Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor M Gaunt

29 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

30 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair.

31 **Evaluation of the 2023 Councillors Induction Programme**

The Service Manager – Corporate Services presented the Evaluation of the 2023 Councillors' Induction Programme and posed a number of questions for the Group to consider in relation to future training and the development of the next Induction Programme in 2026.

The Group were advised that overall the feedback received from Councillors in respect of the three induction sessions delivered after the elections in May 2023 was positive.

The Service Manager – Corporate Services asked the Group to consider the following:

- Was the 2023 Councillor Induction Programme Successful?
- Was the format and number of sessions appropriate?
- Did the content of the Handbook and sessions meet the needs of new (and

- returning) Councillors?
- Were the presentations clear, knowledgeable and welcoming?
 - Does the Group have any ideas or suggestions to improve the Councillors Induction Programme?
 - What does the Group wish to record that would assist in the development of the 2026 Councillors Induction Programme?

The Group thanked officers for the Induction Programme and praised the work that had been done in advance of, and during the Induction Sessions, adding that the timing of the programme was better than in previous years. The Handbook was particularly well received by both new and returning councillors.

The Group felt that improvements would be welcomed in respect of IT support during the first session. Comments expressing that not enough IT officers were on hand to set up new Councillors with their IT and emails and there were some security issues with apple devices.

The Group raised some concerns in respect of the planning session and in particular information for new ward Councillors where live planning applications that required commenting on or were being decided on at the next planning committee or were prompting questions from residents. It was suggested that a briefing note be prepared for new Councillors and sent to them on the day they are elected to bring them up to speed with any planning applications in their ward. A planning clinic was also suggested to enable new Councillors to meet with planning officers and experienced planning committee members. It was noted that the mandatory planning training was delivered before the first planning committee.

The Group suggested a more formal Council-led mentoring scheme for newly elected Councillors. This would not need to be political and could include mentoring training for returning ward Councillors so they may offer support to new Councillors from their wealth of experience.

The Group also suggested that sessions be videoed so that councillors can refer back to them and would help those not able to make sessions, these could be uploaded to the Council's YouTube channels with access restricted to officers and Councillors.

It was **RESOLVED** that Member Development Group:

- a) Discussed the information provided by officers in relation to the evaluation of the 2023 Councillor Induction Programme
- b) Suggested actions and ideas in relation to future training for Councillors or the development of the next Councillor Induction Programme in 2026

32 **Councillors Training - Update September 2023**

The Service Manager – Corporate Services presented the Councillors' Training report which informed the Group of the current position in regard to Councillor Learning and Development including the 2023/24 Councillor training Programme which began immediately after the 2023 Councillor Induction in

May 2023. The events were summarised for information and discussion.

The Group were asked to consider the following:

- Has the training that has already been delivered met the needs of Councillors and been received well?
- Are there any improvements that could be made to the training that has already taken place?
- Has the training that has already taken place identified any areas for future or further training?
- Is the Group aware of any additional training needs that the current programme fails to meet that could be investigated for inclusion on the 2024/25 Programme?
- Are there any concerns about training attendance and if so, what action would the Group like to take?

The Chair raised a specific question relating to attendance, in particular the most recent licensing training which is mandatory for members sitting on this committee. It was noted that four members of the Licensing Committee had not attended the training. The Service Manager – Corporate Services advised that external training courses are provided through the Institute of Licensing which Councillors may access if required and further training may be provided in the new year or when there were changes to legislation.

Some members of the Group expressed difficulty in attending face to face training sessions in the evenings due to work commitments and childcare and asked whether delivery of training via hybrid or virtual sessions would increase attendance. It was also suggested that training sessions be recorded and put online for Councillors to refer back to or if unable to attend a face to face session. However, it was noted that online training would not be recorded as having been attended unless it was incorporated within the e-learning system.

With regards to the Council's e-learning package the Group favoured the single sign on approach. Those Councillors who had attempted it found the quality of the training courses poor and out of date and some Councillors were still having issues with the system not registering they had completed courses. The Group suggested a mixed media of videos and written documents to include assessments as a record of training completed. The Group also requested a user guide. The Service Manager – Corporate Services explained there are no resources to update the current e-learning system, packages are bought in from an external provider and tailored to the Council's Corporate profile. She added if the e-learning is not used the Council is unlikely to invest in a better system.

The Group discussed training attendance and the lack of attendance being around logistics and the timings of sessions not being suitable for all and whether a couple of sessions could be provided, one during the day and one evening session to try and capture as many attendees as possible. The Group also requested that a copy of their individual learning records be sent to them.

There was some discussion about the delivery of training and the heavy reliance on power point presentations. The Group expressed that a more

interactive approach was their preferred option, allowing Councillors to ask officers questions. This was particularly prevalent at the planning training and the Group suggested that perhaps the Chairman of Planning Committee could take a more active role at future training sessions.

With regards to future Councillor training the Group requested a session on Council etiquette and another session on motions and points of order for Councillors who may have missed this during the induction.

In concluding the Chair expressed that overall, the training sessions had been very well attended and Councillor engagement appeared to be good, she also welcomed the support from officers going forward.

It was **RESOLVED** that 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.
- c) Considered undertaking action to encourage Councillors to attend training sessions

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

CHAIR