

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**HELD:****19 FEBRUARY 2008**

Start: 7.00pm

Finish: 8.35pm

Councillors O'Toole (Chairman)
Bailey (Vice-Chairman)

Dereli Swiffen
Kay

Officers: Human Resources Manager
ICT and e-Government Manager
Health and Safety Manager (Web Development)
Human Resources and Development Officer
Senior Member Services Officer (CAJ)

13. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Duffy.

14. SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 the Committee noted the termination of membership of Councillor Collinson and the appointment of Councillor Kay for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Members considered the notes of the Member Development Commission held on 2 October 2007.

In considering the notes comments/observations noted in discussion included reference to:

- Downloading emails to CD
- The Learning Pool

The Human Resources Manager reported that passwords for the Learning Pool facility had been issued in October/November 2007. The uptake for the use of the facility had not been what was envisaged.

It was stated that this matter would be raised with Members via the Group meetings.

ACTION: *Member Development Group Representatives*

AGREED: That the notes of the meeting held on 2 October 2007 be agreed.

17. PROJECT PLAN

Members considered the Project Plan as circulated and contained on pages 24 to 27 of the Book of Reports.

There were no changes to the Project Plan. However, reference was made to the decision some time ago to defer assessment towards achieving the North West Charter on Elected Member Development. It was proposed that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Commission to update Members on the Member Charter assessment process and to ascertain a view on seeking assessment for that award.

AGREED: A That the Project Plan be confirmed.

B That the Human Resource Manager prepare a report on the North West Charter on Elected Member Development for consideration at the next meeting of the Commission.

ACTION B *Human Resource Manager/HR and Development Officer*

18. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS

The Member Development Representatives provided an update on behalf of their Groups.

Comments/observations noted in discussion included reference to:

- The ITN exercise

It was stated that Member Development was now featured regularly as an item at Group meetings.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

19. MEMBER INDUCTION

Members received a demonstration from the Health and Safety Manager (Web Development) of the Member Induction CD.

Comments/observations noted in discussion included reference to:

- Information maintained on the CD.
- Appreciation that the information contained on the CD will only be current at the time of issue and use should also be made of Council information contained on the intra and internet, including the information accessed through CoInS.

Members appreciated that the Induction CD was a useful tool for newly elected Members. It was stated that some of the information could be useful to other Members too and it was suggested that access, via Members desktops, could allow easy access to some of the information demonstrated.

The ICT and e-Government Manager stated that short-cut links, for example, to ColnS could be added to Members desktops.

- AGREED: A That the demonstration be noted.
- B That the Induction CD be updated.
- C That the possibility of easy access to applications and web-sites from Members desktops be investigated.
- ACTION: B *Human Resources Manager in consultation with Divisional Managers*
- C *ICT and e-Government Manager*

20. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY

The following two items were considered in relation to the Member Development Gateway.

21. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY

Members received a demonstration from the Health and Safety Manager (Web Development) of the Member Development Gateway accessed via the North West Employers' web-site. It was explained that the Gateway is a tool to support Members and authorities in the area of Member development. The demonstration showed what was available on the site including advice on learning and development opportunities, opportunities to share learning and good practice and tips. Access to the Modern e-Councillor was also available from the site.

AGREED: That the demonstration be noted.

22. MODERN COUNCILLOR NEWSLETTER

Members received a demonstration, from the Health and Safety Manager (Web Development), of the Modern Councillor Newsletter accessed from the Member Development Gateway previously demonstrated. A version of the newsletter had been circulated to Members to give a flavour of the information available on the site.

Members agreed that the Newsletter was useful noting particularly the "Top Tips to increase Modern Councillor usage". It was felt that a demonstration of the electronic Newsletter, and the Member Gateway would benefit all Members.

The Chairman stated that he would pursue the practicalities and possibility of holding a demonstration on both these items before a meeting of Council with the Leader.

The ICT and e-Government Manager stated that he would investigate whether a "flash version" of the system was compatible with Members computers.

AGREED: A That Officers looked at access to the Modern Councillor newsletter for Members via their laptops.

- B That, in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission, the Human Resource Manager investigates the possibility of arranging a demonstration of the Member Gateway and Modern Councillor to all Members of the Council.

ACTION: A *Human Resource Manager/ICT and e-Government Manager*

B *Human Resources Manager*

23. VOICE RECOGNITION SOFTWARE

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive, as contained on pages 28 to 30 of the Book of Reports, which provided feedback to Members in the use of the computer based voice recognition software.

The ICT and e-Government Manager explained that following contact with Members to ascertain interest in using the voice recognition software, three replies had been received. He went on to explain that whilst the voice recognition system could be used to aid computer users who have either disability or medical issues, it was not designed as a replacement for the keyboard.

Members discussed the merits and disadvantages of the software.

AGREED: A That the contents of the report be noted.

- B That the recommendation to Cabinet that the Council adopt a policy of only offering voice recognition software to users with a disability of medical condition be supported and that the protocol on the use of ICT by Members be updated accordingly.

24. ICT TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

The ICT and e-Government Manager updated the Commission on ICT Training for Members of the Council. He stated that there had been a reduction in the number of calls for assistance from Members to the Help Desk and most queries were resolved through a telephone call. He was also, in consultation with the Human Resource and Development Officer, assessing IT training for those Members who had identified this through the ITN exercise.

The Human Resource and Development Officer added that through the ITN exercise it had been identified that in some areas of IT Members had some difficulties. Some problems had already been addressed and sorted and arrangements had also been put in place for Members to join staff on IT courses, for example Microsoft Word. Other identified issues were around the Outlook system and these were being investigated.

In response it was stated that feedback from Members were that they were happy with the continuing excellent IT support they received.

The ICT and e-Government Manager also informed Members of a forthcoming Bench Marking Exercise details of which would be reported to Cabinet Members next month.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

25. ITN EXERCISE

Consideration was given to the report of the Human Resources Manager as contained on pages 31 to 35 of the Book of Reports which informed Members of the outcome of the ITN exercise which took place from July 2007 and had ended on 18 February 2008.

The Human Resource and Development Officer stated that she had interviewed 29 Members during the exercise. She went on to explain the results of the identified training needs as set out at Appendix 1. It was appreciated that some Members had been waiting some time for their identified training needs to be addressed, but numbers and timing of the sessions had had to be taken into account. The next step would be to produce individual training plans for all those Members who had taken part in the exercise.

Comments/observations in discussion included suggestions for exploring alternative training possibilities including reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities and Lancashire County Council as well as use of internal staff and volunteers. The training links with Edge Hill University were also discussed.

- AGREED:
- A That the completion of the ITN exercise, which had involved 29 Members, be noted.
 - B That the training needs identified at Appendix 1 be noted.
 - C That it be recommended that the proposals to meet the training needs set out at Appendix 1 be agreed with effect from 1 April 2008 and that it be noted that, where there is insufficient demand and resources for a particular identified need, an alternative means of training/development/instruction will be explored.
 - D That individual training plans are prepared for those Members who have completed the exercise.

ACTION: C&D *Human Resources and Development Officer.*

26. BITE SIZE BRIEFINGS

This item had been included for discussion at the request of the Chairman.

It was stated that it would be useful to have brief "bite size" demonstrations and training, preferably before meetings of Council, particularly in the areas commonly used by all Members, for example CoInS and Outlook. The aim of which would be to gain more knowledge of these systems and make better use of these tools.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION HELD: 19 FEBRUARY 2008

AGREED: That it be recommended that the Human Resources Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission and Leader, investigate the possibility of “bite-size” demonstrations/training sessions prior to meetings of Council.

ACTION: Human Resources Manager

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged in consultation with the Chairman.

.....
Chairman