

**COUNCIL BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

31ST OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT:- Councillors Joan Jackson (Chair), Roger Cleet, Geoff Knight and David Whitaker
Gina Dowding (Substitute for Paul Stubbins), Joyce Pritchard (Substitute for Michael Mumford) and John Reynolds (Substitute for Oliver Robinson)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Michael Mumford, Paul Stubbins, and Oliver Robinson

Officers in attendance:

Debbie Chambers	Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Eric Marsden	Democratic Support Officer

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2019 (previously circulated) were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR

No items of urgent business to be taken at the meeting had been authorised by the Chair. However, the Chair informed Members that the Future Homes Standard 2019 Consultation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) had a deadline of 10 January 2020. A draft response had been prepared by Fiona Jayne Clark, Planning Officer (Homes and Communities).

It was agreed that the consultation document and draft response would be emailed out to the Council Business Committee (with Councillor Joyce Pritchard to substitute for Michael Mumford) for their comments, with any questions to be directed toward the Planning Officer; that there would be a 2 week deadline for member comments or changes; and that a final document would be circulated to the Council Business Committee by email and agreed by consensus.

This would constitute urgent business to be taken outside the meeting and, as such, would be formally reported in at the next Committee meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES AND TRAINING COURSES

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report, which was then discussed by Members, who raised the following points: that First Aid (including CPR, defibrillator use) training for Councillors be considered, and potentially supplied in-house; and that the

potential for Councillors to attend Lancashire County Council 'bite-size' courses be investigated.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that new a zero/outcome based budgeting system was being introduced, replacing the previous incremental increases to the budget. However, the amount spent on member development varied from year to year, being highest in the induction year but then tapering off by the fourth year. Interest from Councillors, and their requirements, could also vary. The Democratic Services Manager reported that whilst there were moves toward more e-learning / on-line training, there was also an awareness of some Councillors still requiring support with more basic IT.

It was noted that there was a need for a realistic budget, which addressed the needs identified. Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor John Reynolds and seconded by Councillor Geoff Knight:

"That there be a two tier level of amounts that can be spent on events (depending on role) of up to £500 for Chairs of Committees or Cabinet members, and up to £300 for all other Members;

That a Training Request form be created, with applications to be forwarded via group leaders to the Democratic Services Manager;

That the evaluation form be expanded – especially under the 'relevance / objectives met' heading, with room to write details rather than being just a tickbox, and it be linked to the objectives expected from the application / Training Request form (e.g. what benefits to Council / taxpayers have been achieved by attending this course / conference, and spending this money?).

That the title "Head of Democratic Services" be replaced with "Democratic Services Manager" where appropriate along with the other suggested sensible tidying up of wording / changes."

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposition, whereupon the Chair declared the proposal to be carried. It was the agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would revise / create the forms and circulate to the Committee by email.

Resolved:

- (1) That there be a two tier level of amounts that can be spent on events (depending on role) of up to £500 for Chairs of Committees or Cabinet members, and up to £300 for all other Members;
- (2) That a Training Request form be created, with applications to be forwarded via group leaders to the Democratic Services Manager;
- (3) That the conference / seminar evaluation form be expanded – especially under the 'relevance / objectives met' heading, with room to write details rather than being just a tickbox, and it be linked to the objectives expected from the application / Training Request form (e.g. what benefits to Council / taxpayers have been achieved by attending this course / conference, and spending this money?);

- (4) That the title “Head of Democratic Services” be replaced with “Democratic Services Manager” where appropriate along with the other suggested sensible tidying up of wording / changes.

5 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report, which was then discussed by Members.

In response to a query, the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that prompting to attend did happen, especially to any member who had not attended mandatory training. More this year had been presented on-line, but there was an awareness of the ongoing need for basic IT training / support. However, there was limited leverage that could be applied to any Member not attending – unless a report was made via Standards / Code of Conduct. It was noted that what was considered ‘mandatory’ was a Council decision.

In the light of the feedback received from induction training, the provision of training for Chairs of committees would be re-examined.

The Democratic Services Manager agreed to prepare a lone worker policy, applicable to Councillors, ready for the March meeting.

The work of officers in drawing up the Councillor Training and Development Statement of Intent 2019/2023 was appreciated.

A discussion on mandatory training raised issues that some Councillors had been taken aback by the amount of training required. It was noted that, at the time of drafting the report, three Councillors had yet to complete all their mandatory training, which was very disappointing. The on-line training was noted as having been very good, but various frustrations had been experienced around accessing IT. It was felt that the amount of training was too much in too short a period, with it being preferable if the training period could be extended over 6 – 12 months. The time required for induction training had been quite challenging for those on Council for the first time, especially were they were also in full-time employment.

It was noted though that the mandatory courses were vital, especially for first time Councillors, and particularly in key areas such as Licensing and Planning. The Democratic Services Manager thanked the Members for the useful feedback.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Joan Jackson and seconded by Councillor John Reynolds:

“That the Councillor Training and Development Statement of Intent 2019/2023 be adopted”

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposition, whereupon the Chair declared the proposal to be carried.

Resolved:

That the Councillor Training and Development Statement of Intent 2019/2023 be adopted.

6 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP

There were no appointments to Committees or changes to membership.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 6.45 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Debbie Chambers, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582057 or email
dchambers@lancaster.gov**