

**COUNCIL BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

4.30 P.M.

18TH SEPTEMBER 2008

PRESENT:- Councillors Rob Smith (Chairman), Evelyn Archer, Janice Hanson (substitute for Karen Leytham), Geoff Knight, Sylvia Rogerson (substitute for Susan Bray) and Morgwn Trolinger.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Roger Dennison (observer)

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Susan Bray, Karen Leytham and Joyce Pritchard

Officers in attendance:-

Gillian Noall	Head of Democratic Services
Jane Alder	Head of Information & Customer Services (part)
Suzanne Smith	Senior Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Knight declared a personal interest in the item relating to a proposed university reception due to having a relative employed at one university and another relative being a student at the other. (Minute No. 18 refers.)

12 REVIEW OF COMPUTER USAGE

Further to Minute No. 34 (2007/08), the Head of Information & Customer Services presented a report which set out options for the improvement of current computer equipment and services provided for Members.

The Committee was reminded that a survey had taken place for all Members to share their views on the current provision and following the results of that survey, a number of proposals had been identified to address the issues of concern relating to the equipment, network, security and training.

Details of the proposal were explained by the Head of Information & Customer Services and in particular she demonstrated a new security device which would shortly be required in order to meet new national standards. It was agreed that this should be introduced at the same time as upgrading the equipment.

Having been advised that Members would receive a home visit where necessary for the

installation of any new equipment, the Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved:

- (1) That Members note the action being taken to purchase new laptops and improve broadband connections over a period of two years to be funded from the current Capital Programme, which will improve security and the speed of Members' file and network access as well as further protecting the Council's data and information services.
- (2) That Members be offered an initial home visit where new equipment is being installed.
- (3) That more training be offered to Members on the use of laptops and software and of access to the LCC network remotely.

13 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Members considered the proposed arrangements for the Special Council meeting on 22nd October 2008.

It had previously been agreed that the theme of the meeting would be around the Lancashire Children and Young People's Charter adopted by the Council in January 2006 and the report set out proposals to invite a number of young people to a morning session to consider how the Charter could be implemented in this District and for them to then communicate their ideas to Members at the Council meeting in the afternoon.

The Committee approved the recommendation.

Resolved:

That the arrangements being made for the Special Council meeting on 22nd October 2008 on the theme of Engaging with Children and Young People be approved, with a conference style session for invited young people and facilitated by the Council's Children and Young People's Manager held in the morning followed by an informal style Council Meeting commencing at 3pm at Lancaster Town Hall.

14 NORTH WEST CHARTER CELEBRATION EVENT

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report advising of an invitation to attend the NWEO annual Charter Celebration event scheduled for Friday 21st November 2008. It was explained that the authority had been provisionally allocated a table of up to ten places at the event, depending on the outcome of the Council's assessment. It was anticipated that NWEO would notify the Council of the decision on 8th October 2008.

It was recognised that the Members who attend the Celebration event would be expected to collect the award on behalf of the Council and take part in the presentation. There was also an expectation that each successful Council would use the event to promote some aspect of its District and examples were given of how other Authorities had taken advantage of this opportunity.

It was felt that those Members who had been championing Member development should represent the Council together with some officer representation, but it was agreed that costs which would have to be met from the Member training budget should be kept to a minimum.

Resolved:

- (1) That subject to a successful outcome of the Council's application to be awarded Charter status, a delegation of Members and Officers attend the North West Member Development Charter Award event on 21st November 2008
- (2) That the delegation comprise a maximum of seven Members from the Council Business Committee Members, their named substitutes or those who had assisted with the Charter assessment and a maximum of three Democratic Services Officers responsible for the Member Development Programme.
- (3) That a presentation at the event be developed in the format of 'The Weakest Link.'
- (4) That Officers investigate the possibility of providing free or minimum cost local promotional gifts at the event.

15 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

The Senior Democratic Support Officer presented a report outlining the progress made to date with elected Member development including a list of training events that had taken place between April and September 2008 and which Members had attended. Members also received an update on the progress being made with the project areas of use of IT (including paperless meetings and web pages), Ward and Community Leadership and Cabinet Support.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That forthcoming training events be promoted on the Members' Rooms noticeboards and on Members' desks prior to Council meetings.

16 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

Further to Minute No. 7, a revised Member Development Strategy was submitted which included amendments suggested by Members at the previous meeting.

In addition, the Head of Democratic Services reminded Committee that Council had the previous day agreed that training on Equalities should be included in future Induction Programmes and that awareness training should be arranged as soon as possible for all Councillors in order to help address the Council's weakness in this respect. It was suggested therefore that a further revision to page 4 of the Strategy to list Equalities training under the theme Ward and Community Leadership and remove it as a low priority area should also be approved to acknowledge this acceptance of Equalities awareness as a high priority.

A list of those Members who had still not undertaken a one to one interview and did not

therefore have a Personal Development Plan was circulated for information and the Chairman reminded Council Business Committee Champions to promote the benefits of these interviews to their Group Members.

Resolved:

That the revised Member Development Strategy be approved subject to an amendment to page 4 to list Equalities training under the theme of Ward and Community Leadership.

17 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered a report by the Head of Democratic Services setting out the options for the appointment of Council representatives on outside bodies which had been prepared at the request of full Council.

The current protocol for determining the basis on which appointments to outside bodies are made was explained and detailed consideration was given to the options set out in the report. Members considered the practicalities of administering the various options and also debated the democratic nature of each variation.

It was proposed by Councillor Knight and seconded by Councillor Archer:

“That having considered all the options for making appointments to outside bodies, the Committee recommend to full Council that the present protocol of appointments being made by virtue of a Councillor’s position (such as Cabinet member or Ward Councillor) and the remaining appointments being made on the basis of PR calculated individually on each body be retained.”

On being put to the vote, 5 Members voted for the proposition and one against, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition carried.

Resolved:

That having considered all the options for making appointments to outside bodies, the Committee recommend to full Council that the present protocol of appointments being made by virtue of a Councillor’s position (such as Cabinet member or Ward Councillor) and the remaining appointments being made on the basis of PR calculated individually on each body be retained.

18 CIVIC PROGRAMME - RECEPTION FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS

(Councillor Knight declared a personal interest in the item relating to a proposed university reception due to having a relative employed at one university and another relative being a student at the other).

Further to Minute No. 34 (2007/08), the Head of Democratic Services presented a report outlining the options for the future of the annual Mayoral Reception for Overseas Students.

Following a decision that the event be discontinued if attempts to communicate, publicise and promote the event with Lancaster University Students Union was not successful, it was reported that both the University of Cumbria and Lancaster University

had now responded and were keen to continue the event. They had therefore been asked to suggest a format for the event which they felt would be successful and details of their proposal were set out in the report.

The Head of Democratic Services explained the format which was based on promoting tourism in the District and would take place in the Banqueting Suite on Thursday 23rd October 2008.

Resolved:

- (1) That an event be organised for Overseas Students to take place on 23rd October 2008 in the Banqueting Suite of Lancaster Town Hall in the format suggested by Lancaster and Cumbria Universities as set out in the report.
- (2) That a further report on the success of the event be submitted to a future meeting of the Council Business Committee to determine whether the event should be re-instated in the Annual Civic Programme.

19 CIVIC REVIEW - CITIZENSHIP PANEL

Members considered a report providing details on a proposal to establish a Citizenship Panel. Members were advised of the problems encountered in establishing a Citizenship Panel and the disappointing response to the advertisement for membership.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that she had considered the proposed purpose of the Panel and was confident that progress could still be made with all aspects of the Civic and Mayoral programme on which it had been proposed that such a Panel would be involved with the exception of the proposed Citizenship Awards scheme which it had been intended would be run by this Panel. She therefore suggested that if Members were minded to discontinue efforts to set up a Panel consideration should be given to alternative ways of running an Awards Scheme.

Resolved:

That no further action be taken with regard to the proposal to set up a Citizenship Panel and the Head of Democratic Services be asked to consider alternative ways of introducing a Citizens' Award Scheme.

20 CIVIC REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered a report providing an update on progress to implement the decisions of Council made in December 2006 in relation to the Civic Review Implementation Plan.

It was noted that a number of the recommendations had been implemented since the last progress report.

Resolved:

- (1) That progress and the action taken to date be noted and those items listed as complete in the Civic Review Implementation Plan attached to the report be removed from the list.

- (2) That it be noted that further progress reports on the remaining items in the Implementation Plan will be submitted to this Committee in due course.

21 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman advised Members that this was the last meeting of the Committee before Suzanne Smith, Senior Democratic Support Officer left to commence her maternity leave.

The Committee thanked Suzanne for all her hard work particularly in relation to Member Development and wished her well for her forthcoming happy event.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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