

**COUNCIL BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

5.00 P.M.

24TH JUNE 2010

PRESENT:- Councillors Karen Leytham (Chairman), June Ashworth (substitute for Geoff Knight), Susan Bray, Melanie Forrest, John Gilbert and John Harrison

Apologies for Absence

Roger Dennison and Geoff Knight

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Chambers	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer
Steven Milce	Head of Council Housing Services (part)
Aisha Bapu	Principal Accountant (part)

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2010 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman requested nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

Councillor Susan Bray was nominated by Councillor Karen Leytham and seconded by Councillor John Harrison.

There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Bray appointed.

Resolved :

That Councillor Susan Bray be appointed Vice-Chairman of Council Business Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

3 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION PAPER - "COUNCIL HOUSING A REAL FUTURE"

The Head of Council Housing presented a report which detailed a consultation that had been received on 'Council Housing : a Real Future' which outlined proposals for the reform of Council Housing finance.

Members were advised that the main issue of the proposed reform was to dismantle the current Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system and replace it with a devolved system of funding and responsibility.

Currently the Council was paying a negative subsidy of £1,574,500 and this figure increased annually which was the same situation for many local authorities. The Government would redistribute a 'one off' debt which would make local authorities self financing. In the long term this would make the Council better off as it would allow the Council to build up substantial balances.

The Committee considered the prepared responses to the consultation and made no amendments.

Resolved :

That Council Business Committee endorse the prepared response to the 'Council Housing: a Real Future' consultation.

4 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2009/10

The Democratic Support Officer presented a report which gave details of the training and development that had been undertaken over the last municipal year. The report included all sessions that had taken place over the past 12 months, attendance and cost.

Members were advised that there had been a significant shift in Member Development in the latter half of the year with attendance reducing substantially. This year however, with the introduction of monthly Member Briefings, which had been agreed by full Council as part of the meetings timetable, this had been addressed. It was noted that over a third of all Councillors had attended the first Member Briefing.

It was noted that 10 Councillors had not attended any type of development event in the past year which was a slight improvement on the previous year.

An update on the priorities and project areas that had been agreed for the previous year was also given.

With regard to Personal Development Plans (PDPs), it was suggested that Group Administrators should be given the names of the Members who had not undertaken one.

Members went on to discuss sessions that had been cancelled and attendance. Concern was expressed over the cancellation of the Civic and Ceremonial tour last year. It was agreed that this would be included as part of the Induction for new Members in 2011.

The Committee discussed the ongoing issue of Members signing up to sessions and cancelling or not attending. It was agreed that Group Administrators should be copied into reminder e-mails for training events to ensure their Members attend or send a substitute.

Resolved :

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Group Administrators be given the names of the Members who had not undertaken a Personal Development Plan.
- (3) That a Civic and Ceremonial tour be include as part of the 2011 Induction.
- (4) That Group Administrators be copied into reminder e-mails for training events to ensure their Members attend or send a substitute.

5 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

Members considered a report which requested the Committee to consider the main issues arising from the 2010/13 Corporate Plan and how this related to the Member Development Strategy.

Members were reminded that the 2010/13 Corporate Plan contained four priorities and within these priorities there were five key objectives. The Committee considered how each objective related to Member Development.

With regard to Economic Regeneration – Supporting our Economy and Partnership Working & Community Leadership, it was reported that Budget and Performance Panel had agreed to invite all the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) Thematic Group Chairmen to attend a meeting.

It was agreed that all Councillors should be invited to attend these meetings to learn about the work the Thematic Groups were undertaking and how this related to the Council's Corporate priorities.

It was reported that Community Cohesion training had been highlighted as a priority for the past few years, and to date 82% of Councillors had attended the training in the last 4 years.

The Committee discussed mandatory training and it was suggested that perhaps all Councillors should attend Licensing and Planning Regulatory training when they were first elected. It was felt that this was not practical however and it was agreed that a 'taster' session on Planning and Licensing would be included in the Induction for 2011.

It was further agreed that the Committee would recommend to Council that attendance at Community Cohesion training be made mandatory for Members once every 4 year term of office from 2011.

Members discussed the existing priorities contained within the 2009/10 Strategy and it was suggested that some of these were not now relevant. The following 4 areas were agreed as Priorities for 2010/11 :

- (i) Local Government Finance and Statutory Services
- (ii) Community Engagement/Partnership Working and Community Leadership
- (iii) Economic Development and Regeneration
- (iv) Climate Change

The Committee went on to discuss projects for the year and agreed that preparation for Induction 2011 and Level 2 of the North West Charter for Member Development should be added.

Resolved :

- (1) That all Members be invited to attend Budget and Performance Panel meetings when LDLSP Thematic Group Chairmen would be speaking, to learn about the work of the Thematic Groups and how this related to the Council's priorities.
- (2) That a 'taster' session on Planning and Licensing be included in the Induction for 2011.
- (3) That the Committee recommend to Council that Community Cohesion training be made mandatory for Members every 4 years from 2011.

- (4) That the following 4 areas be agreed as Priorities for 2010/11 :
 - (i) Local Government Finance and Statutory Services
 - (ii) Community Engagement/Partnership Working and Community Leadership
 - (iii) Economic Development and Regeneration
 - (iv) Climate Change
- (5) That preparation for Induction 2011 and Level 2 of the North West Charter for Member Development be added as projects for the coming year.
- (6) That the Member Development Strategy be updated accordingly.

6 NORTH WEST CHARTER FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT LEVEL 2

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report which requested the Committee to consider the way forward in respect of applying for level 2 of the North West Charter for Member Development.

Members were reminded that the Council had been successful at gaining level 1 of the Charter in 2008. After 3 years, local authorities are expected to undertake a review to maintain level 1 status or choose to attempt level 2 of the Charter.

It was reported that the Corporate Plan 2010/13 included a key corporate indicator, CH11 for the Council to achieve level 2 of the Charter in 2011.

To achieve this the Council would have to provide evidence to prove that a particular aspect of Member Development has had a positive impact on the community and the authority itself. A baseline measurement would need to be taken to measure the impact before and after to illustrate the impact.

The Democratic Support Officer outlined two ideas, one relating to Community Engagement and one relating to the role of Councillors as Community Leaders.

It was agreed that Officers would undertake further work on the suggested areas and that Group Administrators would request ideas for a level 2 submission from their political groups.

Resolved :

- (1) That Officers undertake further work around a possible level 2 submission on the suggested areas of Community Engagement and the role of Councillors as Community Leaders.
- (2) That Group Administrators request ideas for a level 2 submission from their political groups.
- (3) That a decision on the project for a level 2 submission be delegated to the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman once the views of the Committee had been sought by e-mail.

7 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 2010

The Committee considered a report which set out options for the 2010 Special Council meeting. Members were advised that the date agreed by Council for this meeting was 13th October 2010.

Members considered a proposal to hold an event to promote the role of City Councillors to people who may be interested in standing in the 2011 local elections. This type of event was usually held before a local election to give potential candidates further information about standing and becoming a Councillor.

It was reported that that Councillors would have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with potential candidates, provide advice and guidance to potential candidates and give them a glimpse of the Councillor's role.

Members discussed the proposed theme and agreed that it should be pursued. It was suggested that the Member Induction DVD (minute 9 refers) should be played at the event.

Resolved :

- (1) That the meeting of Council on 13 October 2010 be designated as the special council meeting for 2010 in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1.
- (2) That the theme of the special council meeting be 'Would you like to be a Councillor?'
- (3) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make appropriate arrangements for the 2010 Special meeting on the lines set out in section 2 of the report, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and other Group Administrators as necessary.
- (4) That a progress report be submitted to Council Business Committee in September setting out further details of the proposed event.

8 MAYORAL CERTIFICATES

Members considered a report of the Head of Democratic Services which set out a request from Councillor Robert Redfern for the Committee to consider the introduction of certificates for past Deputy Mayors and Mayoresses in recognition of their year in office.

It was noted by Councillor Redfern at the last Mayor Making ceremony that currently, there was no recognition of the role of Deputy Mayor and Mayoress in place. It had been suggested therefore that a certificate should be presented to outgoing Deputy Mayors and Mayoresses at Annual Council and this should be backdated.

The Committee discussed the proposal and felt that there should be a recognition for the role of the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress.

It was agreed that an unframed certificate should be presented to the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress at Annual Council and that this should be backdated to 2007 for past Deputy Mayors and Mayoresses.

Resolved :

- (1) That a certificate be presented to the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress at Annual Council.
- (2) That Deputy Mayors and Mayoresses from 2007 be given certificates.

9 INNOVATION AND LEARNING FUND - COMPLETION OF THE MEMBER INDUCTION TRAINING DVD

Members considered a report submitted by the Head of Democratic Services advising the Committee of the completion of the production of a Member Induction DVD funded by the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) Innovation Fund.

The Committee was reminded that Councillor Dennison had applied for funding to produce a training DVD for new Members and this had been approved by the Committee in June 2009.

Resolved :

- (1) That Council Business Committee note the completion of the project to produce a Member Induction training DVD funded by the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) Innovation Fund.
- (2) That the Committee endorse the use of the DVD as part of the 2011 Induction process for newly elected Members.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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