

Feedback from Informal Council Business Committee Workshops 1st November 2007

(1) NEW CABINET MEMBERS

Peer Support

- Political Differences – overcome by use of buddies from neighbouring local authorities

Group Support

- 2 way feedback

Officer Support

- Introductions to key Officers
- Buddies for particular topics
- Basic handbook for each portfolio holder
- Glossary of terms
- More Officer support dedicated to new Councillors/new positions on Committees
- Regular meetings and updates with Officers
- Simpler shorter documents

External Support

- I&DEA training and support

(2) NEW MEMBER SUPPORT

Officer Support

- Understanding the role of a Councillor
- First contact Members' Services
- Introduction to Departments and Managers
- Knowing who to contact
- Promote what help is available
- One to ones
- Support on ALL Committees
- Overview of all Council's main responsibilities and partners
- External role of Council – representation of the Council on outside bodies

- Saturday morning training
- Question & Answer sessions on-line
- Group Administrators should receive some training on what the job entails.

External Support

- P.A.C.T. meetings
- Partnerships

Group Support

- Always available in the form of peer support

(3) COMMUNITY LEADSHIP/WARD ROLES

- Ward newsletters with monthly input from each Council Department concerning their ward.
- Assistance with ward queries
- Emergency out of hours queries – who available at when
- What work is going to be undertaken in Ward, eg road works etc
- Ward info on website
- Information on any complaints/problems in Ward
- Notification of Licensing/Planning applications in Wards

(4) COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

- Need to know how to communicate with media/other political groups/public
- Importance of I.T. skills
- Public speaking
- Mock Committee meeting
- Cabinet Members attend Leadership Academy in their first year
- Assertiveness training
- I&DEA programmed learning
- Question & Answer session on-line
- On-line training

(5) OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- Direct training is only for 18 out of 60 members – feeling that all non-executive members need to know how it works.
- Members page/newsletter could include a summary of main items considered by O&S.
- Could Group Administrators be tasked with passing info on – summaries of decisions.

(6) DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- Those that had done it had found it useful
- Difference of opinion over whether this was really a priority
- Some thought it vital to safeguard the Council – others thought it was common sense
- Suggestion that the most useful training would be to know what help the Councils communications section can provide

(7) CITY/COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Many found it difficult to know who to approach for what
- Lack of understanding about the function of Lancashire Locals
- Important for new Members

(8) GENERAL

- Joint training and opportunities to attend IDeA external training were welcomed – networking with councillors from other authorities
- Distance learning/e-learning suitable for those with limited time or tied to house with young children
- Many didn't know the library existed – promote it more
- Training on budgets – the easy version would be useful
- IT training needed to make sure Members could access the information available
- Staff/Member canteen should be provided
- Group Room - Support of one Group Room for all - should include ; Computers, sockets for laptops, sofas, photocopier, phones, newspapers