



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Member Management Committee

Date: 29th June 2006

Subject: Member Development

Electoral Wards Affected:

None

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. Training and development for Members sitting on Regulatory Panels is currently delivered on a voluntary attendance basis. Apart from an initial mandatory briefing, there is no compulsion for Members to attend further training sessions during the course of their Planning or Licensing¹ careers.
2. It is proposed that an on-going programme of mandatory training is delivered for all members of Regulatory Panels and potential substitutes.
3. The Member Development Strategy recognises the importance of equipping members with the necessary skills to fulfill their roles. Currently there is a gap in the provision of training for Lead members. It is proposed that 'role specific' training is extended to meet the needs of Lead Members.
4. The Member Development Working Group was established in December 2005. This group has successfully formulated the new Member Development Strategy and Induction programme. Given the scope of the work programme devised by the group at its first meeting, it is proposed that the group is reinstated for the 2006-7 municipal year to progress amongst other issues, the revised Member Seminar programme, the roll-out of personal development plans and the development of 'role specific' training.
5. A report detailing all training and conference attendance by Members is currently presented to Member Management Committee on a quarterly basis. It is proposed that, in order to enhance the service to Members through the provision of more timely information, a monthly version of the report is also circulated to Whips outside of this meeting.

¹ For the purpose of this report, 'Licensing' refers to both Licensing and Regulatory Panel and Licensing Committee.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report proposes the following enhancements to the training and development received by Members:

- The introduction of a mandatory annual training programme for all Members sitting on Regulatory Panels.
- The development of 'role specific' training for Lead Members.
- The formal re-establishment of the Member Development Working Group.

1.2 The report also makes recommendations on future learning and development reporting arrangements.

2.0 Background Information

Training for Regulatory Panel Members

2.1 The 'Code of Practice for the Determination of Planning Matters' (part 5 of the Constitution) stipulates that Members should not participate in decision-making at Plans Panel if they have not attended mandatory planning training. In addition, Council Procedure Rule 26.1 (a) states that 'A nominated Member shall be entitled to attend meetings [of regulatory panels] subject to the substitute Member having received appropriate training.'

2.2 At present, Members are given a small-group or one-to-one briefing with a Planning Officer or Licensing Officer before taking in part in their first panel meeting. Ad-hoc training sessions or lunchtime seminars are then held for all Members over the course of the year (none are compulsory).

2.3 A Strategic Review of Planning Services has recently been undertaken. Improvement Aim 3; 'Development of, and Support for Plans Panels' includes the following recommendation:

"Introduce a compulsory minimum standard of training and briefing for all councillors who serve on Plans Panels and deliver the required programme of training and briefing to secure and maintain the agreed standards."

The recommendations arising from the Review were approved by Executive Board on 14th June 2006.

2.4 The concept of extending this requirement to all Regulatory Panels (i.e. including Licensing) has also been discussed.

Training for Lead Members

2.5 The Member Development Strategy 2006-8 and the New Members' Induction programme provides for 'role specific' training in a number of areas, for example Scrutiny. It is proposed that the list is extended to cover the activities of Lead Members.

Member Development Working Group

2.6 A working group consisting of a representative from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green groups was established by Member Management

Committee in December 2005. This group successfully put together the Member Development Strategy 2006-8 and the New Members' Induction programme for 2006.

Future items on the Group's work programme include:

- **Lunchtime Seminar Programme** – design and re-launch an improved annual programme
- **Role Specific Training** – oversee the successful delivery of role-specific training for Members
- **Personal Development Planning** – monitor whether individual reviews are taking place and ensure that learning and development outcomes are being met.
- **IDeA Charter for Member Development** – put together an action plan to achieve the charter by March 2007.

3.0 Main Issues

Training for Regulatory Panel Members

- 3.1 Planning and Licensing are high-profile activities. Given the frequent changes to legislation, procedure and policy it is vital that Members keep their knowledge and skills up to date. This will ensure that any proposals are considered in accordance with the relevant regulations and that Members are carrying out their regulatory roles properly and effectively. If Members are not fully confident, or do not have adequate skills in this area, there could be an adverse effect on the perceived effectiveness of regulatory activity across the city.

Training for Lead Members

- 3.2 The Member Development Strategy recognises the importance of equipping members with the necessary skills to fulfill their roles. Currently there is a gap in the provision of training for Lead Members.

Member Development Working Group

- 3.3 In order to continue to steer the provision of training and development for Members, it is proposed that the Member Development Working Group is re-instated along its current lines (one deputy Whip from each group with Cllr Latty as Chair).²
- 3.4 The Group would continue to meet on a quarterly basis in order to report on its findings and make recommendations to the Member Management Committee.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the Group's first activities (in conjunction with relevant officers) are to consider the design, format and delivery of the Regulatory and Lead Member training programmes and to bring any recommendations to a future meeting of Member Management Committee for approval.

² The Morley Borough Independents declined to be involved in the 2005-6 municipal year.

Reporting to Member Management Committee on Development Activity

3.6 A report detailing all training and conferences attendance by Members is currently presented to Member Management Committee on a quarterly basis. (This can be longer when on occasion the Committee has not met). The current quarter's report is attached as Appendix A. It is proposed that, to ensure that the Group Whips are provided with more timely information, a monthly report detailing training and conference activity is circulated outside of this meeting in addition to the quarterly update.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 If implemented, these proposals will ensure that councillors are adequately equipped to undertake their Council duties, are able to make effective and informed decisions and ensure good governance.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 Making training compulsory for all Members sitting on Regulatory Panels will require an amendment to the Constitution and therefore will need to be endorsed by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. There are no other legal or resource implications.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The proposals outlined in this report aim to make learning and development activities more robust through compulsory training for Regulatory Members, the provision of training for Lead Members and an effective steer in the form of the Member Development Working Group.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to:

- endorse the proposal to make annual training for all regulatory Panel Members compulsory
- endorse the development of 'role specific' training for Lead Members
- re-instate the Member Development Working Group as proposed in 3.3 and advise on membership
- instruct the Member Development Working Group to consider the design and format of the proposed regulatory and Lead Member training programmes, and to make recommendations to Member Management Committee on their delivery as described in 3.5
- note the contents of the Learning and Development report and support proposals to increase the frequency of reporting to monthly (direct to Whips) in addition to the quarterly update.