
Member Support Steering Group

19 July 2012

Report of the Assistant Director, Governance & ICT

New Remit of Member Support Steering Group

Summary

1. This report sets out the revised remit for the Steering Group, as agreed by Council on 12 July, in relation to its advisory role on the wider Member support function.

Background

2. Meeting in its then capacity as the Member Development Steering Group in March the Steering Group considered a report on widening its role to work effectively with Democratic Services in both supporting and developing Members in their various roles. This would enable the Group to work with and advise Democratic Services upon appropriate support packages for Members across the spectrum and not purely in relation to training and development. As with the delivery of training and development, the Group could provide a useful interface with Members of all Groups and in relation to the full range of support functions.

New Remit

3. Having formed the view that widening their scope would be appropriate, this Steering Group then considered an appropriate revised remit and recommended that remit to Council. That remit was adopted by Council at its meeting on 19 July 2012.
4. The new remit of this Steering Group is now as follows:
 - To advise the Head of Civic & Democratic Services upon the provision of support to Members in accordance with the Council's Member Development & Training Policy and its Scheme of Allowances and Entitlements to Members;

- To liaise with Group Members where appropriate on matters affecting the provision of support to them and as considered by the Steering Group.
5. To reflect its change in scope, Council also agreed on 12 July 2012 that the name of the Steering Group should be formally changed to become the '*Member Support Steering Group*'.

Reviewing the Role of the Steering Group

6. In the light of the formally agreed changes to the remit of the Steering Group and its new sphere of operation, it is suggested that Members consider what specific areas they wish to advise beyond those already identified in the Work Plan elsewhere on this agenda.
7. In addition to Member training and development, Democratic Services provide the following range of support and administrative services to Members:
- Members allowances and expenses;
 - Equipment provided to Members (eg ICT, storage cabinets);
 - Registers of interests, gifts & hospitality and data protection;
 - Provision of local and regional information (Guide to Being a York Councillor, access to regional resources) *
 - Fortnightly e-bulletin containing local, regional & national information relevant to Members

*This will soon be complemented by an interactive learning and information site for Members in the form of a webpage (as previously reported to the Steering Group).

8. As the Work Plan shows, an update is to be provided at a future meeting on progress with and ambitions for a new Member interactive webpage. This will provide a facility for interlinking all aspects of support services for Members in terms of information and interactive communication.
9. The current range of allowances and entitlements provided to Members is being reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel, in accordance with statutory requirements. That Panel (IRP) will report to Council in due course. Once Council has decided what, if any, changes it wishes to make to the Council's current Scheme of Allowances & Entitlements to Members, the

Steering Group may wish to have an overview of those entitlements.

10. In relation to the areas identified above and not already shown on the Work Plan for the Steering Group, Members are asked to consider if there are any specific Member Support issues they would like to advise on.

Consultation

11. This Steering Group is already the Member consultative body on Member training and development related issues and it is recognised that the Group's consultative role will now expand to fuller range of Member support services. This report is, in effect, consulting the Steering Group on wider areas of operation.

Options

12. Members can choose to identify some further areas of interest across the Member Support function as identified in paragraphs 7 onwards above, or not. Alternatively, Members may choose not to identify any further specific areas of interest, other than those already on the Work Plan at this time. Rather, Members could wait to receive more information on the emerging webpage and the outcome of Council's decision on its Scheme of Allowances/Entitlements.

Council Plan 2011-15

13. Having a Steering Group to advise upon and consider issues related to the provision of Member Support will assist the Council in equipping Members with the information, support and training they need to make and review decisions upon the key priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Implications

14. There are no direct financial, legal or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Risk Management

15. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendation

16. Members are asked to note the new remit and area of operation of the Steering Group and if considered appropriate at this time, identify any additional areas of focus, other than those already set out in the Work Plan elsewhere on this agenda.

Reason

17. To enable closer cross party working with Members on all aspects related to supporting Members.

Contact Details

Author:

Dawn Steel
Head of Civic & Democratic
Services

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director, Governance & ICT

Report
Approved



Date 13 July 2012

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None.

Annexes:

None