

Member Development Steering Group

Wednesday, 2nd November, 2011

MEETING OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Convery, McCabe and Robinson.

In attendance: Mrs. Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources;
Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager;
Mrs. Lisa Rogan, Principal Human Resources Advisor;
Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer;
Mrs. Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Kyle.

Update of Steering Group's Terms of Reference

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reminded the Steering Group, that at its meeting in November, 2010, it had agreed to Terms of Reference and associated objectives which would underpin the work of the Group. He advised the Members that the Terms of Reference now required to be updated to better reflect the changing role of the Group. The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that the Group would be responsible on a biannual basis for evaluating learning and development activities undertaken by Members and for ensuring that such activities supported the delivery of the corporate plan

After discussion, the Steering Group approved the new draft version of the Terms of Reference and the associated objectives.

Supporting Elected Members

The Principal Human Resources Advisor reported that as part of the Council's Member Charter Action Plan it had been agreed that the Steering Group would be consulted on the range of support which the Council had in place to help accommodate any work life balance commitments Members may have, particularly those Members who may have caring responsibilities. She outlined the measures which the Council had taken to achieve a reasonable work life balance for Members, including the scheduling of Council and Committee meetings and learning and development activities to best allow Members to engage in the democratic process while still protecting their personal and family time. She also advised the Steering Group that all Members would be aware, through the Induction Programme, of their entitlement to Dependant Carers Allowance, paid under the Department of Environment Scheme of Allowances for Councillors, should they so qualify.

Following discussion, the Steering Group agreed to discuss with their respective Parties the current support provision for Councillors and advise the Democratic Services Section of any amendments or additions which Members would like to see implemented

in this regard. The Steering Group also agreed that Members should be consulted in February 2012 in relation to the most suitable times to arrange training and development activities, as well as corporate planning events.

Role Profiles for Members

The Steering Group considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Steering Group is reminded that, at its meeting in November, 2010, it had agreed to adopt the Member Development Charter in order to inform the Council’s Review of its Member Development Strategy which the Steering Group would take responsibility for overseeing. A key requirement of the Member Development Charter is the existence of role profiles for Members of the Council. In order to comply with the components of the Charter, a series of role profiles have been drafted which include profiles for:-

- **Members of the Council.**
- **Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees.**
- **Party Leaders and Deputy Leaders.**
- **Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor.**

The draft role profiles are attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 Best practice from across Councils in other parts of the United Kingdom would suggest strongly that role profiles for Members are an extremely useful tool for both Members and the Local Authorities which they represent. In addition, the existence of profiles for Members will be a key factor when the Council is formally assessed for accreditation under the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development. It is intended also that the role profiles will be used to inform a comprehensive training plan for Members as well as individual Members’ Personal Development Plans.

1.3 The profiles have been developed in consultation with Jonathan Huish who is working with the Council, and the Party Leaders in particular, on a range of issues designed at improving the decision making process and empowering individual Members and Parties.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The purpose of the profiles is to set out clearly the responsibilities and duties associated with each role and also the attributes and skills which are required in order to perform the role effectively.

2.2 The profiles are not intended to be prescriptive and will be reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect changing roles. For example, those which may emerge from a review of the Council’s governance arrangements or developments arising

from the proposed roll out of RPA and transfer of functions from Departments. The first review of the profiles will take place no later than June 2012.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 There are no resource implications.

4 Equality Implications

4.1 N/A

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Steering Group is asked to consider the content of the role profiles and to make such amendments as are required prior to them being finalised and submitted for the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

6 Decision Tracking

Officer responsible:
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
December 2011

7 Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Draft Members’ Role Profiles

8 Key to Abbreviations

RPA – Review of Public Administration

Appendix 1

Role Profile
Elected Representative of Belfast City Council

The first duty of a Member is to fulfil their role as an Elected Representative of Belfast City Council.

To represent by:

- Taking into account the views of all the constituents in your area.
- Championing local community and wider interests when considering Council policy and practices.
- Feeding back and explaining decisions of the Council to constituents and other interested parties.
- Consulting with and communicating the views of the public, partners and stakeholders to the Council.
- Serving on Outside Bodies on which the Council is represented.

To lead by:

- Developing, setting and monitoring policy to establish the strategic direction of the Council.
- Agreeing to the allocation of the Council's resources both human and financial.
- Serving on Committees and Working Groups.
- Acting as an ambassador for the Council.
- Promoting high standards of conduct and ethics in public life.
- Adhering to the Department of Environment Code of Local Government Conduct.
- Being accountable to the public for decisions taken by the Council.

To participate and engage by:

- Contributing to local activities e.g. participating in and liaising with Community forums, including Local Area Partnership Boards, Community Groups etc.
- Working in partnership with officers and other Councillors to promote Council objectives.
- Participating in any relevant learning and development opportunities.
- Developing a constructive and mutually respectful relationship with officers.

Skills required

A Member of Belfast City Council will need to ensure that they develop and maintain the following core skills in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

- Community Leadership;
- Regulating & Monitoring;
- Scrutiny & Challenge;
- Communication Skills;
- Working in partnership;
- Political understanding.

In addition to the above core skills, Members may also require the following supporting skills:

- Chairing meetings effectively and facilitating open discussion.
- The ability to build strong working relationships by displaying openness, empathy and trust and behaving with integrity.
- Ability to manage difficult situations to resolution.
- Effective decision making skills.
- Time management.
- Strategic planning.
- Enhanced communication and questioning skills.

Role Profile
Committee Chairman

This role profile is in addition to the Member's duty to fulfil their role as an Elected Representative of Belfast City Council.

Role, to:

Lead the Committee for the area of responsibility of that Committee, and champion on behalf of the authority by:

- **Working with relevant officers to:**
 - **Ensure appropriate planning of Committee activities.**
 - **Receive all appropriate advice to inform effective Committee decisions.**
- **Chairing meetings and ensuring procedures, rules and protocols are followed.**
- **Establish and maintain effective working relationships with other Members, including the Chairmen of other Committees of the Council and Working Groups established under the authority of the Committee.**
- **Ensuring all contributions from Members, officers and where appropriate, members of the public, are made in accordance with the agreed procedure.**
- **Guiding the Committee to reach decisions, based on the information presented to it. Presenting the minutes of the Committee to Council for ratification.**
- **Taking responsibility for the outcomes of meetings and monitoring progress of recommendations/decision tracking.**
- **Encouraging open and informed debate.**
- **Developing a constructive and mutually respectful relationship with officers.**
- **Representing the Council in dealing with the public, media and other bodies in respect of the business of the Committee**
- **Supporting Committee Members to take-up any relevant learning and development opportunities.**

The Deputy Chairman will:

- **Assist and work with the Chairman in delivering their responsibilities to the Council.**
- **Deputise for the Chairman in their absence from Committee meetings and in so doing undertake all of the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman.**

Skills Required

The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman will need to ensure that they develop and maintain the following core skills in order to fulfil their responsibilities. These skills supplement those of an Elected Member.

- Excellence in Leadership
- Managing performance
- Facilitation

In addition to these core skills the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman may also require the following supporting skills and knowledge:

- The ability to analyse and understand complex issues, identifying a range of information and evidence on which to base decisions.
- The ability to chair meetings effectively and facilitate open discussion.
- Media, networking and interpersonal skills.

Role Profile **Party Leader**

This role profile is in addition to the Member's duty to fulfil their role as an Elected Representative of Belfast City Council.

Role, to:

1. Lead the Party and ensure all Party members are consulted and communicated with in a fair and equitable manner.
2. Chair Party meetings to ensure Council and Committee business is discussed and Party positions are adopted which will help further the Council's strategic priorities.
3. Engage with other Party Leaders on the Council and work collaboratively to ensure decisions are taken which will benefit all citizens of the City.

The Party Leader will:

- Provide political leadership to the Party.
- Be accountable for decisions and recommendations made by the Party.
- Take responsibility for appointing Party members to Committees and outside bodies in line with the Party allocation under d'hondt.

- Participate in the Council's Party Leaders' Forum and act as a conduit for communication with Party members on issues discussed at the Leaders Forum.
- Provide support and guidance for Party members and take responsibility for the arrangements for mentoring of new Members.
- Appoint the Deputy Party Leader and other Party office bearers as appropriate
- Maintain an overview of Party members constituency roles and activities as well as emerging community issues which may influence Council decisions.
- Be the principal spokesperson for the Party with regard to Council business.
- Ensure effective corporate governance is practised including working with other Parties on the Council to achieve possible cross Party co-operation.
- Support Members to take up any relevant learning and development opportunities.

The Deputy Party Leader will:

- Assist the Party Leader in specific duties as required.
- Fulfil the duties of the Party Leader in their absence.

Skills required

The Party Leader and Deputy Party Leader will need to ensure that they develop and maintain the following core skills in order to fulfil their responsibilities. These skills supplement those they have as an Elected Member.

- Political leadership skills.
- Excellent political knowledge, awareness and understanding.
- Ability to analyse, interpret and assimilate complex information.
- Partnership working to achieve collaborative decision making.
- Media, networking and interpersonal skills.
- Time management.

Role Profile **Lord Mayor of Belfast**

This role profile is in addition to the Member's duty to fulfil their role as an Elected Representative of Belfast City Council.

Role, to:

1. **Perform the duties and roles expected to be undertaken by the first citizen of the City.**
2. **Chair meetings of the Council to ensure business is carried out efficiently whilst ensuring that meetings are carried out in line with the Council's Standing Orders.**
3. **Take the lead in promoting a positive image of the City regionally, nationally and internationally.**

The Lord Mayor will:

- **Promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs.**
- **Provide community leadership and promote active citizenship.**
- **Promote and support open and transparent government.**
- **Support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with officers of the Council.**

The Deputy Lord Mayor will:

- **Fulfil the duties of the Lord Mayor in their absence.**
- **Assist the Lord Mayor in specific duties as required.**

Skills required

The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor will need to ensure that they develop and maintain the following core skills in order to fulfil their responsibilities. These skills supplement those they have as an elected Member.

- **The ability to chair meetings effectively and facilitate open discussion.**
- **Leadership skills.**
- **Media, networking and interpersonal skills.**
- **Time management."**

After discussion, the Steering Group noted the contents of the report and agreed that the role profiles be submitted for approval to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

At this point in the meeting, the Steering Group was joined by Mr Mark Palmer, Development Director, South East Employers and Mr John Adams of NILGA who were in attendance to provide the Members with information on the Council's bid to obtain accreditation under the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development.

Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development

Mr John Adams advised the Steering Group that the membership of NILGA had clearly identified Member development as a strategic priority and that the Member Development Charter was considered to be a cornerstone of this process.

Mr Palmer commended the Council on the work which it had undertaken to date to obtain Charter status and provided the Steering Group with details of what to expect on the day of the assessment on 29th November and in particular their involvement on the day. He explained that, in order for the Council to be accredited with Charter status, the Assessment Team would require clear evidence that Member Development was benefitting Councillors, the Council and the wider community. He explained further that the Council would only be awarded the Charter if there was clear evidence of the full involvement of Members in the Member Development planning process.

The Steering Group thanked Messrs Palmer and Adams for attending and contributing to the meeting.

Chairman