

# Ward Councillors Working Group

## Minutes

Wednesday, 29 January 2014 at 18:00

PRESENT:

Councillor J Smith (in the Chair), M Coleman, Fairhead and Plant

Councillor Stone attended as a substitute for Councillor Hacon

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Castle and Hacon.

Linda Mockford (Governance Group Manager).

### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of 10 December 2013 were confirmed. Arising from the minutes the following matters were discussed:

Councillor Stone asked whether the handbook could be made available in A5 format. Councillor Smith suggested further methods of youth engagement such as students buddying up with a councillor, involvement in the Youth Parliament, Youth Advisory Board and students unions. He also suggested inviting students to meet councillors and officers and to look round the various departments of the Council. The group also suggested that the school meetings with Cabinet should be extended to other councillors so other members could be involved if they wished to and also to maintain political balance.

### **2 MEMBERS INDUCTION**

The Governance Group Manager reminded members that this group had already agreed a new members handbook but felt that the current members induction could be improved. She pointed out that the Cabinet Secretary currently meets new Councillors to brief them on their role, introduce them to officers and show them around the Council buildings. An induction evening was also held with the Heads of Departments/ Services but the group thought that this was too overwhelming for newly elected councillors. She said that a variety of information/training sessions were held throughout

the year for new, re-elected and existing members and were normally held prior to Full Council meetings. She reported that a review had been undertaken of what sessions had been held in the past and what other local authorities provide. Using this information, a draft Members Induction Programme had been produced for members' consideration. This had been designed to provide support to the training needs of members' following an election but could also be used for member development in general. The Programme was composed of two elements: the post election and administration period and a series of training and information sessions held over the months after the election. She also pointed out that more key information would be given to new members in their induction pack, such as the Ward Profile.

Councillor Stone suggested that if it was possible, no committees should be held in the first two weeks after the election so that new members could be trained. He also stated that it would be useful to have a calendar of meetings at the first Full Council meeting, so members would be aware of dates. If it wasn't possible to arrange full training, he thought an overview of committees would be useful for new members.

Resolved:

That the draft training programme be recommended for approval

The meeting ended at: 20:00