CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS’ TRAINING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 7 December 2004
at 2pm
in Conference Room 3, Council Offices, Canterbury

Present: Councillor Patterson (Chairman)
Councillors Flaherty and Seath.

Officers: Matthew Archer – Project and Systems Manager
Wayne Gough – Scrutiny and Research Officer
Lyn McDaid – Committee Administrator

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor Patterson should be Chairman of this Group for the remainder of the municipal year.

2 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mark Ellender.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2003

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

None.

5 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)

Matthew advised that last year the Member Training Group had devised a PDP process which involved Members reviewing each other as peers. This idea had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny (O & S) Committee in November 2003 and had been adopted but purely on a voluntary basis. He was not aware of any voluntary appraisals which had taken place since then. Matthew advised on other approaches the Group could adopt which would negate the need for PDPs.

The Group discussed the options available. They raised issues relating to:

(i) The response in the past from Members had been very lukewarm.

(ii) It was essential that all Members were trained in quasi judicial matters such as development control, licensing, appeals, standards and housing appeals.

(iii) Good trainers were essential.

(iv) Understanding and scrutinising the budgets were other essential topics for the training programme.
 Members’ briefing sessions were considered to be successful although it was recognised that turnout was not as good as it could be.

The benefits of signing up to the South East (SE) Employers’ Charter for Member development.

Any training sessions should be offered both daytime and evening.

It would be beneficial to know how other authorities conducted their Member training programme.

It was agreed that:

(a) the Members should encourage other Members from within their Groups to attend the forthcoming Freedom of Information training.

(b) Matthew should investigate the possibilities for training on the topics referred to in (ii) and (iv) above bearing in mind the training offered in other authorities.

(c) there should be a co-ordinated approach for all Member training.

6 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Matthew’s draft terms of reference for the Group were discussed. During the discussion it was felt there should only be two or three topics included in each Member briefing session.

It was agreed that:

(a) the following terms of reference be approved for this Group:-

The overall purpose of the Group would be to consider all matters relating to Member training and specifically training relating to:-

1. The role of the councillor in the community.
2. The knowledge and personal skills required to be an effective Councillor.
3. Awareness of national and regional issues affecting the council.
4. Awareness of issues affecting the services provided by the city council.
5. The quasi judicial duties undertaken by specific committees (Development Control, Licensing, Appeals, Standards and Housing Appeals).
6. The suitability of training provided by external bodies such as South East Employers.
7. The analysis of the South East Employers’ Member Development Charter and ascertaining what would be required so that its requirements were met.
8. Member induction.
9. IT training.

and the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to endorse them.

(b) The Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider extending the membership of this Group to six, two Members from
each political party one of whom would be the council's representative on the South East Employers and one who must be an Executive Member.

(c) The Group should meet regularly (at least every two months).

7 MEMBER TRAINING – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The Group considered a memorandum which had been circulated from Kim Bennett on training for Development Control purposes.

The Group considered the timing of the proposed training events.

It was agreed that Kim Bennett be informed that this Group concur with the content of his memorandum but feel any meetings should be held from 6pm on an evening when committee meetings are not already taking place and should also be offered during the day time. These events should be for all Members and the Members of this Group would encourage other Members of their political group to attend.

8 SOUTH EAST CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Flaherty advised upon the launch which he and Matthew had attended for the above and he felt it was important that the council signed up to it before the next comprehensive performance assessment was held. Matthew explained the principles of the Charter.

It was agreed that Matthew would send copies of the information he had on the Charter to the Members of the Group for consideration at the next meeting.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 5 January 2005 at 2pm in Conference Room 3. Items for consideration would be the Charter for Member Development and the progress which had been made in organising future Member training events.

10 FUTURE TRAINING INITIATIVES

Matthew advised that the council received information about potential Member training courses on a regular basis.

It was agreed that any Member training course information be circulated at the next appropriate meeting for the Group's consideration.

11 JOINT TRAINING WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES

It was agreed that Matthew should pursue the idea of joint training initiatives with neighbouring local authorities.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3.40pm.