

9 March 2018

JOINT MEETING OF BROOKE AND WHITTLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – 19 MARCH 2018

A joint meeting of Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at 5.30pm on Monday 19 March 2018 in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

The joint meeting will be chaired by Councillor Claire Edwards, Chair of Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Adam Norburn
Executive Director

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Apologies – to receive apologies for absence from the meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.

To receive declarations of –

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of a County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

3. Member Training – to receive a report on Warwickshire wide training opportunities for members.
4. Introduction to the Draft Asset Management Strategy – to receive a presentation from the Property Manager.

PART 2 – EXEMPT INFORMATION

There is no business involving exempt information to be transacted.

Membership of Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Councillors Claire Edwards (Committee Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Mrs Bragg, Cranham, Keeling, Mrs New, Pacey-Day, Srivastava and Dr Williams

Membership of Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Councillors Sandison (Committee Chair), Brader, Butlin, Douglas, Gillias, Lowe, Mrs O'Rourke, Roberts and Ms Watson-Merret

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533591) or e-mail veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

Joint Scrutiny Committee – 19 March 2018

Training for Members

Briefing Paper

1.1 Introduction

In late 2017, officers from all the Warwickshire borough and district authorities were approached by officers from Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to ascertain how member training was undertaken at the various Councils. This was primarily triggered by WCC due to the increasingly low numbers attending training and what appeared to be a general indifference by members to engage in training.

Subsequently, WCC officers visited all Borough and District authorities in the county to discuss this further. This led to an officer working group being established, the first meeting of which took place on 22 January 2018 at which the various issues relating to member training were discussed. The meeting was attended by all authorities apart from North Warwickshire Borough Council.

1.2 Issues raised

The following issues were raised:

- Training budgets at authorities ranged from £2,000 - £14,500 per annum.
- With the exception of Stratford District Council, there appeared to be general apathy amongst members towards training. At most authorities, most training sessions only attracted between two and six members, although Stratford had an average attendance of 10.
- It was suggested that the feasibility of countywide training on key topics could be considered. However, there may be practical issues to take into account such as charging other authorities for attendees and members being prepared to travel to other venues.
- With the exception of Nuneaton and Bedworth Council (two yearly local elections) and this Council (local elections by thirds), all other authorities within Warwickshire have 'all out' elections, which placed less emphasis on induction training for three out of four years. Rugby has to provide an induction training programme for new members annually.
- Stratford held training sessions at a particular time each week. Members undertook personal development plans with their Group Leader, which helped to inform their training programme. Stratford appeared to be very committed to training and the authority also had a well-established Member Training Working Group which met regularly. The authority also invited parish councillors within its boundary to attend its training sessions at a cost of £30 per attendee. This was an initiative which Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) endorsed.

- With the exception of Stratford, there were no sanctions for members who did not attend training. Stratford withdraws the 12th monthly allowance from a member who has not undertaken a minimum of 12 hours training each year.
- Further to discussions, the officer group considered it would be beneficial to engage a small number of members to attend a future meeting, to gain details of their experience of training. It was suggested that a maximum of two from each authority be invited.

1.3 Conclusions

There are a number of issues for consideration:

- * Do members consider training essential?
- * Do members consider training should continue?
- * Would members prefer training to be conducted “in house”?
- * What would encourage members to attend training?
- * What are the priorities for training?
- * There has been criticism of trainers who have been engaged by this Council in the past. However, there is a limited pool of companies who offer training specific to members.