

Committee: **AUDIT AND REVIEW**

Date: **3 August 2007**

Report: **MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Purpose of the report

1. To report and seek decisions from members on outstanding issues raised at the Audit and Review Committee meeting on 9 February 2007.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework.

Background

3. At its meeting in February, the Committee considered a report on a draft training and development programme for members for 2007/08. Whilst the draft programme, as submitted, was adopted, a number of further issues, as recorded in the following extract from the draft minutes, were also raised and a further report requested:

“(e) the principle of a member mentoring scheme be endorsed and further work carried out on how such a scheme would operate;

(f) members be surveyed to gauge their likely support for training events on racial and disability awareness and on the Council for National Parks' report on Prosperity & Protection;

(g) a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to clarify the issues raised by the Standards Committee on its support for Racial and Disability Awareness Training and on members' response to the survey referred to in (f) above.”

Issues for Consideration

4. Taking, in detail, the issues referred to above:

Member Mentoring: a report on this was taken to the May meeting of the full Authority when the proposed member mentoring scheme was adopted. All members were invited to 'sign up' as mentors and so far the following have expressed a willingness to act in this role:

Mrs A Brooks, TRN Harrison-Topham, C Lis, SR Macaré, Mrs S Marshall, Dr KM Petyt, Ms N Stedman and W Weston.

Racial and Disability Awareness/"Prosperity and Protection"

9. Attached as **Appendix 1** to this report is a copy of the correspondence to, and the responses received from members with regard to the possibility of the Authority arranging training on:
 - (a) Racial and Disability Awareness (R&DA); and
 - (b) on the Council for National Parks' report - 'Prosperity and Protection'
10. Member responses (though only 11 in total) indicate some support for both topics. Five members indicated that they would attend R&DA training and eight supported some 'Economic Impact' training.
11. One response is very supportive of both events, and makes particular reference to R&DA training and how that topic arose at the Standards Committee meeting last November. The matter was also discussed at the Standards Committee meeting on 19 June.
12. To assist members, extracts from the minutes of both meetings of that Committee are attached as **Appendix 2**.

Future training

13. Members need to consider if training should be promoted for either of the two topics referred to in paragraph 9 above? If so, by what means - formal training, lunchtime briefing (the earliest 'slot' being January 2008) or possibly at a Policy Development Forum?
14. If the answer is yes, members then need to decide whether or not that training should be compulsory. The only 'compulsory' training that the Authority currently promotes is to permit members to sit on the Authority's Planning Committee.
15. If it is decided that the training need not be compulsory, but that it would be at members' individual discretion, an option for the Authority, rather than to promote a training event that, given that only five out of 26 members indicated support, would be likely to be poorly attended, might be to 'piggy back' onto training events arranged by other authorities such as the County Council(s) and District Councils.
16. In order to pursue that latter option, North Yorkshire County Council was contacted to discuss what training it had provided for its members. As a result, officers were invited to attend a meeting of the North Yorkshire Improvement Partnership (NYIP). This Partnership, of nine North Yorkshire local authorities and the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service which is funded through the Local Government Improvement and Innovation Partnership, is developing a programme of training projects, including Leadership Development, Member Development and Community Leadership. North Yorkshire local authority members may already be familiar with the partnership and its training work.
17. The Partnership is currently putting together its training programme for the coming year and is aware of a need for the inclusion of 'Equality and Diversity' training. It is

likely that, although much of the training promoted through the NYIP will primarily be for members of local authorities, there will be other topics that will be appropriate for and of benefit to national park members.

Conclusion

18. Whilst there is undoubted merit in all members of the Authority being trained on the issues outlined, there seems to be little enthusiasm amongst members for a specific training event to be arranged.
19. A pragmatic approach may be for the Authority to make use of the training and development programme being formulated through the NYIP and to report back to this Committee when that programme has been produced.

RECOMMENDATION

20. Members' views are requested.

David Butterworth
Chief Executive

23 July 2007

Background documents:

None

MEMBER 'SURVEY' ON TAKEUP OF TRAINING

We asked Members:

During a recent discussion by the Audit & Review Committee on the proposed Member Development programme for 2007/08 it was suggested, inter alia, that we should consider providing training in relation to two particular areas:

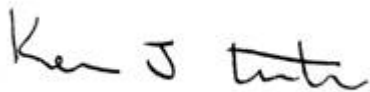
- *Disability/equality, and*
- *CNP's Prosperity & Protection report (into the economic impact of National Parks on the region)*

Before any arrangements are taken forward for further consideration, we need to gauge take-up by members to ensure that numbers are sufficient for sessions to be viable. Any training opportunities offered by this Authority need to be ones that a significant majority of members would be willing and able to attend.

Please could you therefore indicate to Lesley Knevitt in the Secretariat team whether you would attend such sessions if provided? PLEASE BE HONEST It is expensive to provide training and we need to have an accurate indication of likely attendance.

We will report further on member development to the next meeting of Audit & Review Committee, so it would be helpful if we could have your views as soon as possible.

Many thanks for your help.



*Kevin Lancaster
Champion, Corporate & Democratic Core*

MEMBER RESPONSES

Eleven responses have been received, as follows:

1. I would be interested in training on the Economic Impact of National Parks.

2. I would be interested in attending a half day seminar on Economic impact in NPs but I would like it relating to the RES and the Regional Spatial Strategy so that we can see the links and effects of one impacting on the other. The next piece of scrutiny of Yorkshire Forward by the YHA will be based on rural issues so including YF could be timely! Also could be very narrow if only CNPs talk at the Seminar.

And having said all that my diary really gets full very early, April is filling up now and first demands on May are beginning to come in.

3. I would go to the economic impact training but not disability as I have had considerable training previously in this area of activity.

4. I cannot recall who suggested these topics for training, or for what reason. For my part, I would attend if training was arranged, but a) the equality subject does not fill me with enthusiasm. It is a PC matter, and they rarely excite. I would probably agree with everything, but would not be involved in making it happen anyway; and b) I have kept up with the development of the CNP report. I suspect those who need to be persuaded about this matter would not turn up. So: no great enthusiasm, but I will try to take part if sessions are arranged.

5. I must admit I am unlikely to attend either training session unless there was a very strong indication that I needed to.

6. Lesley, I would try to attend whatever is arranged as member training, the only difficulty being that the dates may not be ones on which I was 'free'. I put all the Y.D dates -of our 'regular' meetings on the calendar as I'm sure the others do , but it's when a date is arranged without very much notice that life becomes difficult - and I'm probably one of the people who has the most 'flexible' diary - being a retired person!! Can I suggest that if at all possible, once the subjects of today's email get sorted, that the programme of member training stops being so ad hoc and becomes something which has a programme of dates , just like our other meetings have. This would probably not be able to be implemented until the back end of this year or even next spring but would at least give members prior warning when planning their schedules....Ann

7. Concerning member training - I think it important that Members, and officers, get diversity training, by which I mean raising our awareness of disability and cultural differences in the many audiences that we reach, or should reach.

We are all often totally unaware of the barriers that we put up for people with a range of disabilities - infirmity, impaired hearing or sight, chronic or sporadic illness, mental health, etc; disability doesn't mean just being dependent upon using a wheelchair. Then there are all the cultural differences - different expectations, understandings, confusion in translations or social behaviour allowing for misinterpretations. It's about stepping back and re-viewing all our practices from other perspectives. It is something that I think just about everyone can learn something from (and ironically it is often those who don't think they need such training who are unconsciously putting up barriers and therefore in most need of it...!)

This topic for Member training was raised at the last meeting of the Standards Committee, where there was I recall unanimous support for a recommendation that such training be provided, and it was resolved to recommend to the Corporate Core Member champion that the topic be included in the programme for Member training. I would hope that this recommendation would get wide support - it can benefit all of us in all our public duties and activities.

8. Both are great topics but disability/equality would not be at the top of my list. I would have thought that this is now a given. Every person, not just Authority members, should by now know about discrimination. It's a general topic, not really member-specific. Would I attend? Of course, we all can learn more. A problem for the Authority? I really hope it is not. If anybody feels that it is, by golly we need training soon and I'll change my mind on the first part of what I said.

Second topic: yes, let's start with the report but then widen it. Designated areas are good for business and local people. If member training can help convince people of that, let's have it. And could we look at examples outside England as well?

9. No and no. Disability/equality training oozes from the ears already. The P&P report might form part of a policy forum discussion.

10. I would be interested in both, although I have attended training at Craven on disability/equality. Having said that it was quite a while ago.

11. I think it could be a good idea to have a discussion on disability.

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2006
EXTRACT FROM MINUTES**

21/06 OTHER BUSINESS

The Monitoring Officer had circulated with the formal agenda papers an extract from the Local Government Chronicle dated 16 November 2006 entitled "Time to shape ethical culture". The article stated that research at Manchester University had identified Standards Committees as being either 'lapdogs, watchdogs or guide dogs'. [Lapdogs being ineffective because they do not have the resources or because of inappropriate political influence; watchdogs being focused closely on member conduct, the operation of the statutory code and making sure members were prepared for conducting adjudication if required; and guide dogs fulfilling the statutory roles, being supportive rather than only regulatory.]

Members suggested that they were a positive watchdog type committee, although it was questioned whether they should be more of a guide dog type. It was noted that the role of the Committee was set by the Authority, and pointed out that Standards Committees elsewhere had been given a wider remit. It was suggested that the Corporate Core Member Champion might have a liaison role with the Committee.

In considering the possibility of the Committee setting the agenda rather than being reactive, the issue of member training was highlighted and, reflecting on an earlier agenda item, the need for training in areas such as racial and disability awareness.

The Secretariat Officer stated that a meeting was shortly to be held between the Chief Executive and Corporate Core Member Champion to discuss how to re-invigorate the member training programme. He added that he would ensure that the issue of such training was raised.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee's view of the need for racial and disability awareness training for members, officers and volunteers be drawn to the attention of the Corporate Core Member Champion.

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2007
EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**

Some discussion took place on the need for racial and disability awareness training - the point highlighted at the end of the minutes of the last meeting. Members were advised that a report on member training had been submitted to the last meeting of the Audit and Review Committee, but had failed to be considered by members as the meeting had been inquorate. The report would now be considered by that Committee at its next meeting in August 2007.

The Secretariat Officer reported that following the raising of the issue by members, enquiries had been made of other local authorities on the training provided to their members. Officers at North Yorkshire County Council had referred to the existence of an organisation called the North Yorkshire Improvement Partnership that provides a range of training events for members of local authorities in North Yorkshire. He had attended a recent meeting of the Partnership and hoped that the Authority would be able to 'piggy-back' onto training events arranged through the partnership.

Members, whilst welcoming that development, were concerned that the training that they believed was vital, would not necessarily be attended by those members most in need. It was hoped that the Committee could receive some feedback after the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee and that the Authority's Solicitor/Monitoring Officer could reinforce the need for the training at the Code of Conduct training event for members on 19 July.