

Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 13 November 2024

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
N/A;

Report on the activity of the Councillor Support Steering Group

Contact for further information:

Gary Halsall, Tel: (01772) 536989, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
gary.halsall@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

An overview of matters presented and considered by the Councillor Support Steering Group at its meeting held on 12 July 2024 and 6 September 2024.

Recommendation

The Scrutiny Management Board is asked to receive the report of the Councillor Support Steering Group.

Detail

This report provides the Scrutiny Management Board with an overview of matters presented and considered by the Councillor Support Steering Group (CSSG) at its meetings held on 12 July and 6 September 2024.

Future meeting dates for the group have been scheduled as follows:

- 10 October 2024
- 23 January 2025
- 27 March 2025

Meeting held on 12 July 2024

Digital Services Update for Councillors

Paul Sutcliffe (Digital Services Business Engagement Manager) presented an update on Digital Services developments affecting councillors. He provided an update on steps that are being taken to address the recent IT security incident.



It was stated that passwords in the first instance need to be reset on corporate laptops/yoga's and all councillors are encouraged to log onto their corporate laptops on a regular basis to ensure all security updates and app updates are up to date. With IT security high on the agenda, all councillors are reminded to complete the information governance e-learning training programme.

Enhanced DBS Checks for Councillors

Catherine Earnshaw (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented an update on the enhanced DBS checks for councillors, reporting that nine DBS verification sessions had taken place throughout June and July to support councillors to complete their applications.

Group Whips will continue to be updated on progress so that they can encourage colleagues to complete their applications. It was noted that councillors will only be required to show their certificate on request and should keep the certificate in a secure [place].

Elections 2025 - Induction Planning

Catherine Earnshaw (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented a report on the proposed induction plans following the county council elections in May next year. A summary of induction arrangements that took place for 2021 was outlined, along with a number of suggestions for improvement for the 2025 induction programme.

The Councillor Support Steering Group made the following suggestions:

- A political buddy should be allocated to each newly elected councillor in addition to an officer buddy.
- A face-to-face induction day should be arranged as a full day.
- To consider bringing back the councillors' IT purchase scheme.
- To consider arranging a tour of the county, either physically or virtually, to give a greater insight into partnership working and key issues in Lancashire.
- The date of the induction day should be confirmed and passed onto political groups well in advance so that candidates can be informed of the event.
- General public speaking sessions.
- Provide the training programme of key dates to the political groups, which could be disseminated to potential election candidates.

Councillor Induction and Key Contacts Booklet

Catherine Earnshaw (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented the proposals to review the Councillor Induction and Key Contacts booklet and asked the Councillor Support Steering Group to comment on the 2021 booklet to see if any improvements could be made to its format and content.

The Councillor Support Steering Group suggested that the booklet is issued as a one-off paper copy and then electronically so that it can be regularly updated.

Copilot for Councillors

Lisa Coar (Learning and Development Officer - Business Systems) provided a brief demonstration of how Copilot can support councillors, demonstrating some scenarios where Copilot can be of significant benefit to councillors. She reported details of upcoming training sessions for councillors.



Meeting held on 6 September 2024

CSSG Updated Terms of Reference

Catherine Earnshaw (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented the updated CSSG Terms of Reference. It was reported that the county council, at its annual general meeting on 23 May 2024, agreed that the Councillor Support Steering Group shall increase to 11 county councillors (on the basis of six Conservative members, two Labour members and one Liberal Democrat, Independent and Green member). The report was noted and Councillors Iqbal and Sutcliffe were duly welcomed to the Group.

Digital Services Update for Councillors

Sarah Oldendorp (Strategic Client Engagement) presented an update on Digital Services Support for Councillors, which included a summary of incidents raised by councillors via the Digital Services Helpdesk (councillors select option 4) and Digital Services portal and future/current ICT changes and software upgrades that may affect councillors.

The Group was informed of key projects being undertaken by Digital Services, which included, The Blue Badge Application project, Online Museums Admission and Retail application, The Digital Signage Solution, The Highways Analytic Platform and the Future Fibre upgrade.

Caseworker.gov.uk

Craig Alker (Democratic Services Officer) presented a report on the use of Caseworker.gov by councillors, the background and options for its continued use. The group noted the report and proposed that work should be undertaken to see if any other councils offer their own caseworker system, to look at potential collaborative working and best practice.

Supporting Councillor with their Health and Safety

Catherine Earnshaw (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented a report, outlining the up to date health and safety measures that are in place to support county councillors whilst in County Hall. This included Health and Safety How Do I guides, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) arrangements, parking arrangements for Blue Badge holders, Accident, Incident and Near Miss reporting process, Councillor Visits Risk Assessing, Portable Appliance Testing and Basic Life Support training. The Group noted the report.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

This report has no legal implications.



Financial

This report has no financial implications.

Risk management

This report has no risk management implications.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
-------	------	-------------

None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

