

report

meeting	COUNTY COUNCIL	
date	24 September 2009	agenda item number 7b

Report of the Deputy Leader

East Midlands Regional Assembly

I recently attended the Annual General Meeting of the Regional Assembly in Melton Mowbray. In addition to representing the Authority on the Assembly, I also am now a member of the Regional Housing, Planning and Transport Board. The Authority has not been represented on this Board for a number of years.

As Members will be aware, regional and sub-regional governance structures are currently undergoing a period of major change with the impending disappearance of Regional Assemblies and the transfer of their responsibilities to the Leaders' Board. However, whilst the Assembly remains in existence it is an opportunity to ensure the authority's views are included in regional discussions.

County Councils Network (CCN)

I have represented the Council at two meetings of the County Councils Network, and I am seeking appointment to the Localism & Community Empowerment Task Group.

Member Induction

My portfolio includes responsibility for establishing effective support, communication and information services to all Members of the County Council.

With over a third of the Council being newly elected in June it has been important to ensure that new members have been effectively inducted into the council. Members will recall that the induction process started while the results were still being announced as we were provided with a welcome pack including the essential information that we all needed. New members were given the opportunity to see the IT options available to them and to decide what sort of IT provision would support their preferred ways of working. This equipment has subsequently been provided.

The formal induction programme was designed to provide the essential information that new members needed whilst recognising that it would not be appropriate to provide too much information when members were still finding their feet.

All new members have been briefed on the code of conduct and had the opportunity to explore their responsibilities for the Council's financial wellbeing and their roles as "corporate parents". Those appointed to the relevant committees were also briefed on planning and licensing, scrutiny, and employment appeals.

All Members should have received a note from Member Support on the Autumn induction programme which includes a series of events to provide a greater understanding of councillors' roles in respect of Rights of Way, Planning and Licensing, Performance, Health and Safety, and Emergency Management. I hope that new members will find these helpful and long-standing members may also find something new in them.

We all know that how you think about an organisation is shaped by how you are treated when you first join. I hope that colleagues would agree that the induction process has made them feel part of the County Council and would want to acknowledge the efforts by staff in Democratic Services in making them feel welcome and enabling them to undertake their new roles.

Councillors' Intranet Pages

On the front page of the Council's intranet pages there is a link to the "Councillors" intranet site. This is a dedicated resource for Members maintained by the Local Government Library which should become the first stop for news and information. The site contains the latest local government news, links to useful external websites, as well as access to information about the Council itself and briefings. As this is only in its initial stages feedback from members who have used it would be helpful.

COUNCILLOR MARTIN SUTHERS
Deputy Leader of the County Council

