

First Local Government Southern Region Forum
17th September 2024

In attendance

Michael Braithwaite, Sherine Thompson, Robert Maclaren, Donna Spicer, Emma Fair, Mike Woods and Sonya Davis
Lib Whitfield PSSO

Apologies

Marzena, Jo Viner

The meeting was very well received and was an initial open discussion about the new forum, what we need and shared goals. It will be a work in progress but a very positive first meeting.

Summary notes

Welcome and Intro

-This is a new local government forum for reps across Southern Region and this is the first meeting and a free agenda meeting to openly discuss taking this forward.

-There will be another meeting in 1 month's time as this is a new forum and it will gradually move to a quarterly forum. There will also be a request for agenda items before each meeting from reps.

-Reps working in Local Government or representing members in LG will be invited. This forum is strictly for local gov excluding schools as there is a separate active forum for schools.

- Some reps may not have received invite as on system as schools ***ACTION*** - Lib will send out to all school reps to indicate if they are also representing local gov members.

Purpose

The forum is to establish better links between reps across the region and joined up campaigning and strategy. It is also essential for feeding into the national meetings and for getting feedback from national meetings.

General Discussion

General discussion with everyone about how best to take this forward and what areas we need to be looking at:

- Ensure reps are able to feed in to an agenda before each meeting
ACTION Lib to circulate invite and call for agenda items before next meet.
- Schedule length of meeting may vary depending on agenda

- Could include good practice examples and current campaigns being shared with forum so reps can compare and discuss issues and good practice
- Reps/branches to be asked about good practice information and templates that are used to create a template bank of documents and template emails that reps and branches might use
 - *ACTION* Sonya to share good practice email and process used in her branch
 - *ACTION* Lib to call for examples from officers and reps in email for next meeting
- Ensure officers are fully aware and that future dates are distributed to officers to include in any new ISMs with new reps to ensure release
 - *ACTION* Lib once dates set will send round to officers and seniors
- Meetings to be online working towards one face to face day meeting once a year to conduct additional training/workshops etc
- Discussed potential WhatsApp group (decided to wait until more reps involved and up and running and reviewed at each meeting)
- A good discussion about how we communicate with members across the region with suggestions on putting on webinars on specific topics or as campaign activities arise around the region and to encourage members to become more involved
- On top of webinars and good practice comms also look at targeted video comms to get members more involved – To be discussed as forum goes forward when possible and needed (Eg. In campaigns) We already use videos often as these are more accessible for many.
- Restructure training is much needed for reps generally. Bite size training with checklists need to be produced.
 - Other training that may be needed: TUPE (there is a quick guide but this could be delivered at a forum session to help). Mental Health/ Equality Impact Assessments and how to use them
 - *ACTION* - Lib and Sonya to speak with education department about small bitesize training for restructures to begin with
- Discussion on what issues members engage on – Dorset parking charges members are engaging. ACTION – For each agenda at each meet a discussion on good practice/wins/what has worked on getting members and reps engaged on local issues and how we share this practice.
- Importance of grass roots organising – Empowering members and getting reps in each workplace. Also a general discussion on ways to involve reps on day to day work of organising so that every rep is engaged. Examples such as delegating some tasks or using reps existing skill sets to everyone's benefit. It is really important to share the workload amongst reps not only to ensure we

are upskilling and empowering reps but also to ensure no one person gets overloaded as not everything has to be done just by the branch secretary when it comes to organising. Strong branches share the workload and work together.

- Discussed ensuring information is as accessible as possible in member comms and that we are striving for a wide diversity of reps to ensure all members voices are represented.
- Ensuring all branches are aware and engaged in Local Gov Forum –
**ACTION* Lib to speak to seniors and officers to directly engage with branches around attendance at forum and for officers to be updated and included.*
- Establish the role of chair as we get more reps on board.

Things to think about going forward:

Goals –

Peer-to-Peer support for reps through forum.

Better communication across region on issues in LG.

Improved democratic processes

Improved feed in with national through national reps on regional forum

Feedback –

How do we engage with LG members working from home

How do we build the union when many staff work from home

What comms/processes do branches use that have good engagement – share good practice

Getting new reps on board – good practice examples

Membership breakdown of stats for region in local gov and rep numbers