

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2016**

**Present:**

Councillor N Barker – (Chair)  
Councillor G Baxter MBE  
Councillor J Austen  
Councillor A Cooper  
Councillor M Gordon  
Councillor J Windle

**Also Present:**

Donna Cairns – Senior Governance Officer  
Martin Derbyshire – Members IT & Training Officer

**48/15 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence from the meeting as all Members were present.

**49/15 Minutes of Last Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Working Group held on 7 January 2016 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

**50/15 Member Involvement Half Day – 26 January 2016 – Evaluation Results**

The Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 26 January 2016.

The programme had consisted of three presentations; Housing Ambition Project, Risk Management and Transformation Programme Update.

It was noted that the majority of Members who attended and provided feedback either agreed or strongly agreed that the presentations were helpful and increased their knowledge and understanding of their role of Members and officers work.

Many of the comments in the feedback related to the chairs in the meeting room and the Working Group were advised that an order had been placed for new chairs to be provided.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the evaluation results in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 26 January 2016.

## **51/15 Evaluation Results from External Events**

### Community Leadership in the East Midlands – 2 February 2016

The Working Group considered the external training evaluation report on the training course Community Leadership in the East Midlands provided by East Midlands Councils. This session was attended by Councillor Boyle and Councillor Cornwell.

The overall feedback was positive, particularly the interaction with other Councillors and the sharing of views and experiences. However, some parts of the day felt rushed and Members considered the location of the course in Melton Mowbray to be a long way to travel.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the external training evaluation report on the Community Leadership in the East Midlands held on 2 February 2016.

## **52/15 Member Development Budget 2015/16**

The Working Group considered the report of the Senior Governance Officer on the current level of expenditure on the Member Development Budget 2015/16. The budget for 2015/16 was set at £4,000 and to-date the total expenditure had been £3,035.25.

The Working Group were advised that there were outstanding expenses still to be paid from this year's budget for external training courses and travel expenses. These would be met from the remaining budget for 2015/16.

The Working Group were also advised that the budget for 2016/17 had been set at £3,000. It was noted that the 2015/16 budget was at a higher level as the year had included an induction programme which incurred greater expenses than normal.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the report.

## **53/15 East Midlands Councils: Regional Policy Briefing Events for Councillors 2016/2017 Programme**

The Working Group considered the report of the Senior Governance Officer on the review of the Programme of East Midlands Councils Regional Policy Briefing Events for Councillors in 2015/16 and the proposals for the Programme for 2016/17.

The Senior Governance Officer advised that the table of attendances of the 2015/16 events should also have included Councillor Gordon who attended the session in November 2015. This was an additional place at a cost of £40. This brought the total cost of the Programme for 2015/16 to £540, including the £500 subscription and the cost of this additional place. A total of 10 places had been taken up with an average cost of £54 per place.

The Working Group noted that the feedback of the events was varied, although generally the Programme was useful for sharing information and updates on policy developments.

The Working Group supported the subscription of the Council for the Programme for 2016/17 and requested that East Midlands Councils consider varying the locations of the sessions throughout the region.

The cost of the Programme for 2016/17 was slightly increased to a cost of £510 plus VAT. The cost of additional places would continue at £40 per person.

**RESOLVED** – That the Working Group:-

- (1) Notes the review of the East Midlands Councils Regional Policy Briefing Events for Councillors 2015/16.
- (2) Supports the Council's participation in the East Midlands Councils Regional Policy Briefing Events for Councillors 2016/17.

#### **54/15 Review of LGiU Subscription**

The Working Group considered the report on the review of the Council's taster subscription to the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) service, including daily news emails, policy briefings and a bi-monthly magazine.

The Working Group also considered whether the Council should renew the subscription for a full year from April 2016 to March 2017.

The results of the survey which had been undertaken with Members were circulated to the Working Group at the meeting. Fourteen responses to the survey had been returned with the majority confirming that they do read the LGiU daily news and the Councillor magazine. A lesser number of Councillors indicated that they read the policy briefings and essential guides.

The feedback on whether these documents were useful and relevant was fairly mixed with the Daily News emails being the most favoured. Some Members indicated that they received the same or similar information from the BBC News and Local Government Association emails, however, the majority of Councillors indicated that they did not receive the same or similar information elsewhere.

The cost of the LGiU subscription annually for North East Derbyshire District Council would normally be £2,345. The Council had been offered an introductory rate for the first year of £1,995.

As this amount would take up a substantial part of the Member Development Budget for 2016/17 the Executive Director – Operations had been consulted and had advised that an alternative budget could be found for this subscription without impacting on the Member Development Budget.

The Working Group considered that the subscription was useful for Members and that it should be promoted to Members to refer to more frequently.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group:-

- (1) Notes the review of the LGiU taster subscription.
- (2) Supports the Council's subscription to the LGiU for 2016/17 and requests that the subscription be reviewed at the end of the year.

**55/15 IT Training Update**

The Members IT and Training Officer advised the Working Group that the majority of his time was spent offering ICT and iPad support to Members rather than formal training.

In February 2016 Members had been offered drop-in sessions for support on iPad apps such as Pages and Numbers, however, there had been no take up for these sessions.

Members could continue to drop in for support and advice on using their iPad or laptop.

The Working Group discussed the current number of laptops that are still used by Members. The Members IT and Training Officer advised the Working Group that there were six Members who still used laptops which were more costly due to the licenses requires for Microsoft Office and Swivel which is required for accessing the Council's network.

The Working Group commented that Members should have a justifiable reason for having a laptop instead of an iPad and that as laptops fall due for replacement Members should be encouraged to take an iPad instead.

The Working Group also discussed the availability of printing and access to ink cartridges for their own printers. The Working Group commented that Members should be discouraged from printing when they have access to papers on their iPad, however, the printer in the Members Room could still be used for occasional printing. The Governance Team would look into the issue of responsibility for replacing the toner in this printer.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the update provided by the Members IT and Training Officer and recommends that the use of laptops by Members be phased out, unless Members have a justifiable reason not to have an iPad.

**56/15 Any Other Business**

The Working Group discussed the recent event provided by East Midlands Councils which included a session on the Councillor Commission. This was attended by Councillor Austen and Councillor Barker.

It was agreed that information from the session on the Commission be distributed to Members to encourage them to submit written evidence as part of the Commission's consultation.

There had also been an article in the Local Government Association First Magazine in February 2016 on the Councillor Commission which would provide some context for Members and the contact details of how to contact the Commission.

RESOLVED – That the information on the Councillor Commission be distributed to Members.

**57/15 Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group discussed that the meeting on the 28 April 2016 at 10.00 am had been cancelled and that the next meeting of the Working Group would be at the beginning of the new meetings schedule.

Details of the next meeting would be distributed to the Members of the Working Group following the approval of the Calendar of Meetings.

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