

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2017

Present:

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

19/16 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence submitted to this meeting.

20/16 Minutes of Last Meeting

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

21/16 LGiU 2017 Membership Renewal

The Working Group considered a report on whether to renew the subscription of the LGiU for a full year following the completion of the first full year's subscription.

The Senior Governance Officer (Acting) advised that the Council subscribed to the LGiU service in October 2015 for a trial period of six months. The service included Daily News email updates, Policy briefings, Policy reports, Essential guides and the bi-monthly Councillor magazine. Other than the Councillor magazine all of these were also provided by email. There were around 300-350 Policy briefings issued each year. Access was only available to Councillors and employees of LGiU members. Recent Policy briefings had covered housing and homelessness, homelessness in Greater Manchester and Great Glasgow and the National Citizen Service Bill etc. A weekly Policy summary was sent out by email each week with links to the week's Policy briefings and lists briefings to be published over the following fortnight.

The Group were advised that the membership of the LGiU entitled Councillors and officers to receive discounts on training events and invitations to Network events. All recent LGiU training sessions and events had been held in London. The cost of the LGiU events was approximately £224 reduced to £174 for LGiU members. Recent events had included Councillor Training; Charing Skills and Developing Commercial Awareness.

In 2016 many Councils had signed up to the LGiU and now nearly 200 Councils subscribed with over 25,000 CEOs, Leaders' and MPs reading the mailings every day.

The LGiU had advised that the calculation of their membership fees were based upon the size of the population served by the local authority. For North East Derbyshire District Council the membership would normally be £2,425 per annum. The Group were advised that the cost of the subscription would be paid for outside of the Member Development budget.

It was agreed that in future the review of the LGiU subscription would not have to come to Member Development Working Group for approval as the subscription was paid for outside of the Member Development budget.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group was satisfied with the LGiU service and wished the Council to subscribe to the LGiU for a further year.

22/16 Evaluation Results from External Events

(a) East Midlands Councils Annual Policy Conference on Planning, Health and Welfare Reform – 23 September 2016

The Working Group considered the external training evaluation report on the East Midlands Councils Annual Policy Conference on Planning, Health and Welfare Reform held on 23 September 2016. The session was attended by Councillor M Gordon and Councillor S Boyle and both had completed evaluation forms for the event.

The Working Group noted the feedback on the event had been positive and it was felt that the event topics were relevant but some of the topics, such as Welfare Reform, had been skipped through too quickly.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the external training evaluation report on the East Midlands Councils Annual Policy Conference on Planning, Health and Welfare Reform held on 23 September 2016.

(b) LGA Taxi Licensing Seminar – 8 November 2016

The Working Group considered an evaluation report on an external event with the LGA Taxi Licensing Seminar held on 8 November 2016. The event was attended by Councillor M Gordon and also Councillor A Anderson from Bolsover District Council.

The event cost of £345 were waived as North East Derbyshire District Council was a member of the LGA. The event covered many areas of Taxi Licensing, such as:-

- Developments and Issues in Taxi Licensing;
- LGA Improvement Support;
- Learning from Rotherham;
- Role of Licensing Committee;
- CSE Training for Taxi Drivers;

- Disability Equality;
- Principals involved in determining fitness.

The Group noted the feedback on the event which was considered very informative and the most useful part of the event was to hear and discuss Taxi Licensing practice and policy within other local authorities. This event was recommended to colleagues.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the external training evaluation report on the LGA Taxi Licensing Regional event in Gateshead held on 8 November 2016.

23/16 Member Development Evaluation Results

(a) Member Involvement Half Day – 6 September 2016

The Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 6 September 2016.

The programme consisted of three presentations on Community Leadership, Government Consultation Paper on Business Rate Retention and Media Relations Awareness.

11 Members attended the Half Day and 10 Members completed evaluation forms at the end of the event. Overall the event was well received with all Members finding every presentation informative and relevant to them as Members and also engaging, although to varying degrees.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the evaluation report on the Member Involvement Half Day held on 6 September 2016.

(b) Member Involvement Half Day – 15 November 2016

The Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 15 November 2016.

The programme consisted of three presentations which were Environmental Despoilment, Achieving Customer Service Excellence and Standards and Code of Conduct.

13 Members attended the Half Day and all completed evaluation forms at the end of the event. Overall the event was well received with Members finding every presentation informative and relevant to them as Members.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the evaluation report on the Member Involvement Half Day held on 15 November 2016.

(c) Making Effective Use of Overview and Scrutiny – A Scrutiny Skills Workshop – 3 November 2016

The Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members from the Making Effective Use of Overview and Scrutiny – A Scrutiny Skills Workshop held on 3 November 2016.

The training day was organised in response to a request put forward in the Members' Training Needs Survey. The Scrutiny Training Day was organised jointly for Scrutiny Members at North East Derbyshire District Council and Bolsover District Council and was held in the Council Chamber at North East Derbyshire District Council offices. It was an all day event and a buffet lunch was provided. The overall cost of the event was £996.75 + VAT. Bolsover District Council were recharged 50% of the event costs.

The programme covered the principles and practices involved in Overview and Scrutiny as well as providing opportunities for thinking about how to develop and improve the effectiveness of our own Scrutiny Committees. The session was facilitated by Tim Young, an associate from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU).

14 Members attended the Half Day, 8 from North East Derbyshire and 6 from Bolsover and all 14 Members completed evaluation forms at the end of the event.

On the whole, Members felt that they had gained something from the session and enjoyed the opportunity to discuss Scrutiny with their colleagues. The agenda covered a wide range of topics and lasted a full day, meaning a couple of attendees did not attend all the session. For any future sessions a Half Day event would be considered.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the evaluation report on the Making Effective Use of Overview and Scrutiny – A Scrutiny Skills Workshop Day held on 3 November 2016.

24/16 Member Development Budget 2016/17 – Monitoring

The Working Group considered the current level of expenditure on the Member Development budget for 2016/17. The Member Development budget for 2016/17 was £3,000 but the amount was revised to £5,000 to accommodate training identified through the Training Needs Survey. The current spend, including commitments, was £5,216, but this could be offset by recharges to Bolsover District Council of £1,943, given a net position of £3,273 against a revised budget of £5,000. There was currently £1,727 available to spend.

Areas of expenditure to date were:-

- £702.60 for Chairing Skills Event on 16 May 2016;
- £63.75 on buffet for Chairing Skills Event;
- £510 for East Midlands Council Programme of Regional Policy Briefing Events for Councillors;
- £95 for EMC Personal Resilience Course attended by Councillor S Boyle;

- £890 on Media Training, Media Friendly on 1 August 2016;
- £498 on Scrutiny Training Event on 3 November 2016;
- £700 (order raised, subject to change) for the Member Involvement Session on Influencing and Negotiation Skills in January 2017;
- £600 (order raised, subject to change) for the Member Involvement Session on the Effective Ward Councillor in March 2017.

Members of the Group raised a query over the Member Involvement Session to be held in March 2017 and felt that the Effective Ward Councillor session could be brought in-house.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the Member Development budget for 2016/17.

25/16 Member Development Strategy Action Plan – Monitoring

The Working Group considered a report to monitor the progress achieved in implementing the Member Development Strategy Action Plan in the second quarter of 2016/17.

The Senior Governance Officer (Acting) outlined the key actions and what progress had been made to date. A key point raised was:-

- Carry out Member Learning and Development Needs Survey for 2017/19 Programme. It was advised that the survey had been distributed in December 2016 with a return date of 31 January 2017.

The Group were advised that Senior Management would be consulted to identify areas of training needs to bring to Members attention, and this would be done at the end of January 2017.

Members of the Group raised concerns over the Member Involvement Half Days and felt that these sessions could be stream lined down to four sessions per year. It was requested that a Councillor should be involved in the presentations. Various options for the sessions were discussed and Councillor J Austen advised that the LGiU had a website page which included work books which could prove useful when organising Member Involvement Half Days.

Overall Members of the Group felt that the Member Involvement Half Day Sessions should be more Member led.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the progress achieved in the second quarter for the Member Development Strategy Action Plan and agrees to stream line the Member Involvement Half Day events to four sessions per year and make these sessions more Member led.

26/16 Any Other Business

The Group were advised that the new iPads were all ready to collect but two Members had not yet collected theirs. An issue was raised over laptops and Mike Rush in ICT was looking into procuring new laptops for Members who still had these.

A question was raised on why four Members were still using laptops and not iPads. It was advised that iPads were not suitable for all Members and ICT would be asked to look in to a possible wireless mouse and key board for the iPads to make it easier for Members who struggled to work on the iPad.

ACTION – Martin Derbyshire to look into the issue of the laptops and iPads and report back to the next meeting.

27/16 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Member Development Working Group would be held on Wednesday, 22 February 2017 at 10.00 am.

MDWG MINS (0104) 2017/AJD