

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2018

Present:

Councillor N Barker – (Chair)
Councillor J Austen
Councillor G Baxter MBE
Councillor D Hancock
Councillor J Windle
Donna Cairns
Martin Derbyshire

17/17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cooper and M Gordon.

18/17 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Working Group held on 15 November 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

19/17 Member Development Evaluation Results

Member Involvement Half Day Evaluation Results – 9 January 2018

The Member Development Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 9 January 2018.

The session consisted of three presentations:-

- Public Speaking and Learning Styles;
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints (inc Web Chat);
- The Voice of the Councillor.

14 Members attended the Half Day and all 14 Members completed evaluation forms at the end of the event (100%).

Overall the session was well received and the majority of respondents considered the event to be very helpful.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group notes the evaluation results of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 9 January 2018.

20/17 Member Development Strategy Action Plan Monitoring (Q3 and Q4)

The Member Development Working Group considered a report to monitor the progress achieved in implementing the Member Development Strategy Action Plan in the second and third quarters (Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb and March) of 2017/18.

Eleven of the actions in the Plan had been completed, six were either not yet due or were ongoing activities and three actions were overdue having yet to be achieved.

The actions which were still to be achieved were as follows:-

- Prepare Local Democracy event in consultation with the Member Development Working Group and Strategic Alliance Management Team;
- Review the accessibility of the Member Development information on the Members' Extranet;
- Develop follow-up evaluation form.

The report set out the activities proposed to be undertaken by the Governance Team to achieve these targets and by October 2018 and the Group supported these proposals.

RESOLVED – The Member Development Working Group note the progress achieved in the second and third quarters of 2017/18 for the Member Development Strategy Action Plan.

21/17 Member Development Budget 2017/18

The Member Development Working Group considered a report which advised that no expenditure had been made on the Member Development Budget for 2017/18.

Members noted that the budget for the year 2018/19 had been set again at £3,000 and that the proposed Member Development Programme for this year had identified a number of sessions where cost may be incurred through the use of external facilitators/trainers.

The Group were advised that training was delivered in-house by Members or officers where possible.

RESOLVED – The Member Development Working Group note the report on the budget for 2017/18.

22/17 Member Training Provisions Within the Constitution

The Working Group considered a report which set out a proposal to extend the provisions within the Constitution relating to Member training.

The proposal was that the provision relating to Planning Committee, which states that Members will be encouraged to undertake training, be extended to apply to all Regulatory and Scrutiny Committees.

The Group discussed that these provisions should be stronger and require Members to undertake training prior to sitting on the Committee. The difficulty that the Council may face in enforcing these provisions was discussed, however, the Group felt it was important that the Council's Constitution reflect the importance of training and the position that all Members should be required to undertake this in order to carry out their role effectively and to protect against legal challenges to decision making.

It was also proposed that an additional provision be included in the Constitution relating to other areas of training that should be considered mandatory, including equality, data protection, safeguarding and Code of Conduct. In considering the appropriate place in the Constitution to include this provision it was proposed that Article 2 relating to Councillors responsibilities be amended to include a provision to require Members to undertake mandatory training identified within the Member Development Strategy.

The Group requested that this proposal be submitted to Standards Committee as part of a Constitution Review also to be submitted to Council for approval.

It was agreed that Members of the Group would prepare a Motion to submit to the next Council meeting in May proposing that the Council write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to request that national legislation be implemented to allow for mandatory training to be enforced across all Councils, including County Councils, District Councils, Parish Councils and Unitary Authorities.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The Member Development Working Group recommend to Standards Committee that provisions be added to the Articles of the Constitution relating to mandatory training for all Members and Committee specific training for Regulatory and Scrutiny Committees.
- (2) A Motion be prepared by the Member Development Working Group for Council in May calling for the Secretary of State to introduce provisions to allow Councils to enforce mandatory training.

23/17 Member Development Annual Report 2017/18 and Draft Member Development Programme 2018/19

The Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer which provided the Group with the opportunity to comment on the Member Development Annual Report 2017/18 before it was submitted to Cabinet.

The Group discussed the proposal for Chairs' training to be held at the start of the new Municipal Year. The Senior Governance Officer advised the Group that a proposal was being explored to share the training with Members from Bolsover District Council and that a session would be delivered twice on the same day, one in the afternoon and one in the early evening, with the afternoon session hosted at Bolsover District Council and the evening session hosted at North East Derbyshire

District Council. Members from either Council would be open to attend either session, which would provide greater flexibility for Members in different parts of the District and with different preferences as to the timing of the session. The Group supported this proposal.

The membership of the Member Development Working Group as stated in the Annual Report needed to be amended to include Councillor David Hancock.

Minor amendments to the Member Development Programme for 2018/19 would be made to include the dates for the Chairs' training and Planning Committee briefing and any other sessions still to be finalised. The report would then be submitted to Cabinet at the beginning of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The Member Development Working Group noted the Member Development Annual Report 2017/2018.
- (2) The Member Development Working Group supported the submission of the Member Development Annual Report 2017/18 to Cabinet for its approval.

24/17 Members' IT Access and Usage Survey Results

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer on the results of the Members' IT Access and Usage Survey.

The survey was carried out amongst Members on how they use their iPads or laptops to access online information, including the Members' Extranet and access to emails. The survey was issued to Members by email on 5 March 2018. All Members also received a letter advising of the survey and the availability of a paper copy should this be preferred, however, no paper copies of the survey were received. Only 14 survey responses were received with a response rate of 26%.

The Group discussed that the results of the survey demonstrated that the Members who use their iPad or laptops regularly are confident in finding information and using the devices to communicate with local residents. However, the low level of responses demonstrates the lack of engagement of many Members in learning how to use their iPads.

No proposals had yet been formulated on the next steps in supporting Members with their information and communication technology requirements. However, the Working Group discussed the need for actions to be taken to promote more paperless working across the organisation as a whole, not just Members.

Councillor Windle requested that the Governance Team only issue paper copies of agendas to him for Growth Scrutiny Committee and Licensing Sub-Committees. He would read other papers on his laptop.

Officers from the Governance Team and ICT would be meeting with the Joint Strategic Director – People to discuss the survey results and Members ICT

provision. Further reports would be brought back to the Working Group regarding any future proposals.

RESOLVED - That the Member Development Working Group noted the results of the Members' IT Access and Usage Survey.

25/17 Member Development Working Group Work Programme

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer on the completion of the Work Programme for 2017/18 and the development of the proposed Work Programme for 2018/19, to aid the planning of the Working Group agendas and meetings.

RESOLVED –

- (1) The Member Development Working Group noted the conclusion of the Work Programme for 2017/18.
- (2) The Member Development Working Group noted the Work Programme for 2018/19.

26/17 Any Other Business

There was no other business discussed at this meeting of the Member Development Working Group.

27/17 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Member Development Working Group would be held on Wednesday, 18 July 2018 at 10.00 am in Chamber 2, District Council Offices, 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth.
