

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2019

Present:

Councillor R Smith – (Chair)
Councillor N Barker
Councillor G Baxter MBE
Councillor A Cooper
Councillor J Windle

29/18 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Austen.

30/18 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Working Group held on 14 November 2018 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

31/18 Results of the Members Learning and Development Needs Survey 2019-2021

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer, which advised of the results of the Members' Learning and Development Survey 2019-2021.

The survey had run from 1 December 2018 to 31 January 2019 and had been issued electronically, with paper copies made available at the Council meeting in January. 11 surveys had been completed during this period, six on paper and five electronically (20% of Members). Given the low level of response it was intended that the survey would be re-issued following the election in May 2019 in order to gain the views of new Members and provide a further opportunity for any returning Members who had not already completed the survey during this period.

The report set out the responses to each question contained within the survey and concluded with a list of eight priority needs as follows:-

- (1) Planning;
- (2) Governance/Constitution/Meeting Procedures;
- (3) Casework/Ward Councillor Skills;
- (4) Licensing;
- (5) Media/Social Media;
- (6) Budget and Financial Planning;
- (7) Housing/Homelessness;
- (8) Code of Conduct.

The issue of timing of training session again had been raised with a number of Members saying they find it difficult to attend training in the day time.

Consideration would be given to holding some evening sessions in the Member Development Programme during 2019/20 and views would be sought from new Members from May 2019 onwards.

Members were advised that the Priority Training Needs, along with other core Council service/Corporate Plan Priorities and any other Policy or legislative topics considered necessary would be built into the Member Development Programme for 2019/20 and 2020/21. A draft of this Programme would be brought to the next Member Development Working Group meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Member Development Working Group:-

- (1) Notes the outcome from the recent Members' Learning and Development Needs Survey 2019-2021.
- (2) Notes that officers will bring back a draft programme for member development activity for 2019-2021 to the next meeting.

32/18 Review of Member Role Profiles

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer, which advised of the proposals for the review of the Member Role Profiles for 2019 onwards.

Members were advised that very few comments were received during the consultation on the Role Profiles with the majority of those stating that the current versions were up-to-date and adequate.

A suggestion had been made that the title Chairman be amended to Chairperson, however, the title Chairman was used throughout the Constitution for consistency and it was not proposed to change this within the Role Profile.

RESOLVED – That the Working Group agree that no amendments are required to the Member Role Profiles for 2019-2023.

33/18 Member Development Strategy Review 2019

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer on the review of the Member Development Strategy for 2019-2023.

As part of the review in 2018/19 the Governance Team considered the delivery and supported member development across other local authorities, regionally and nationally, and carried out a self-assessment against the Local Government Association Member Charter criteria to identify ways in which the delivery of member development at the Council could be improved.

Other changes had also been considered during the review, such as the implementation of mandatory training provisions within the Constitution as agreed at Council in May 2018. These provisions were set out in the report.

The main changes incorporated into the revised Strategy and accompanying Action Plan included:-

- Leadership Development support;
- Better promotion of Learning and Development opportunities and resources to improve the equality of access;
- Exploring opportunities for sharing learning between Councillors and Councils;
- Improving the Learning and Development Programme;
- Improving of references to case law and LGA guidance supporting the expectation of Members receiving training before sitting on regulatory Committees.

Other minor changes were made to reflect how member development activities are delivered, including online training and videos.

Members identified that Department of Transport guidance also mentioned the importance of ensuring Members on Licensing Committee were adequately trained and resourced to carry out their roles and it was agreed that the reference could be incorporated into the revised Strategy.

Members discussed the potential repercussions for Licensing decisions being made without training and the implications of individuals being issued taxi licenses who were not fit and proper persons. It was noted that this was a significant risk as a consequence of failure to ensure public safety could have serious consequences. Providing training to Members and encouraging attendance was clearly a priority, however, actions were also taken to make training resources available to all Members who could not attend training sessions and professional advice is provided by Licensing Officers and Legal Advisors to Licensing Sub-Committees in every instance. It is highly unlikely that the majority of Members sitting on Licensing Sub-Committees would not have been trained and as such the risk to the decision making process was reduced.

It was also suggested that training records should be included on Councillor profiles on the website. Members were advised that the implementation of the new Committee Management Software would be used to facilitate the publication of attendance records at all meetings and training could be included within this.

RESOLVED – That the Member Development Working Group:-

- (1) Notes the revised Member Development Strategy as attached to the report.
- (2) Recommends the revised Strategy to Cabinet for adoption.

34/18 Member Development Strategy Action Plan Monitoring (Qtr 3) (Oct, Nov, Dec)

The Member Development Working Group considered a report of the Senior Governance Officer, which allowed the Group to monitor the progress achieved in implementing the Member Development Strategy Action Plan in the third quarter (Oct, Nov, Dec) of 2018/19.

Members were informed that 15 of the actions within the Plan had been completed, five were either not yet due or ongoing activities which were on target, and two actions which had previously been marked as overdue had now been completed.

Only one action was outstanding – Review of the Member Development materials on the extranet. This action had been marked ‘suspended’.

The Working Group had previously received a report on the draft Member Development database that was intended to provide quick access to the training and development materials available to Members on the extranet. Before finalising the database the update to the extranet was awaited. Since the upgrade had been completed, however, the links to the resources did not work as anticipated and Members were informed that ICT were unable to support the project at this time due to changes in staffing.

Members considered the wider issues with Members accessing the Committee papers on the extranet and that this needed to be addressed as a matter of priority. The Senior Governance Officer advised Members that she would raise this with the ICT Service to provide an update on the resolution of the issues.

RESOLVED – That the Member Development Working Group:-

- (1) Notes the progress achieved in the third quarter of 2018/19 on the Member Development Strategy Action Plan
- (2) That the Action Plan be signed off as completed.

35/18 Evaluation Reports for any recent Member Events

(a) Licensing Training Event Evaluation Results – 23 October 2018

The Member Development Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Licensing Training Event held on 23 October 2018.

The session was delivered by James Button, Solicitor, and covered:-

- Licensing Committees and Decision Making;
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding;
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers;
- Hackney Carriages, Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators.

Six Councillors from NEDDC, one Councillor from BDC and five officers attended the session hosted at North East Derbyshire District Council. A further session was hosted at Bolsover District Council, which one Member from North East Derbyshire attended.

10 completed evaluation forms were received at the end of the event at North East Derbyshire District and a summary of the responses received was

attached to the report. Overall the session was well received and it was intended that the trainer be used again in 2019/20 for a programme of Member Development for Licensing Committee.

The Senior Governance Officer informed Members that the course cost £680 approximately and given the importance and complexity of this issue it was considered value for money due to the high quality of the training.

RESOLVED – The Member Development Working Group considered the evaluation results from the Licensing Training held on 23 October 2018.

(b) Member Involvement Half Day – 29 January 2019

The Member Development Working Group considered the evaluation statistics and comments submitted by Members in respect of the Member Involvement Half Day held on 29 January 2019.

The session focussed on two topics:-

- Mental Health Awareness; and
- Time Management.

12 Members attended the Half Day and 10 completed evaluation forms at the end of the event. Overall the sessions were well received with positive feedback on both topics within the session.

The Member Development Working Group recommended that the Mental Health Awareness Training be provided to all officers across the Council and the Senior Governance Officer agreed to raise this issue with the HR Department.

The Mental Health Awareness Training course cost approximately £550 which was considered to be good value for money given the high quality of the training received.

RESOLVED – The Member Development Working Group notes the evaluation results from the Members Involvement Half Day held on 29 January 2019.

36/18 Any Other Business

Members raised concerns regarding the arrangements for the return of iPads prior to the election in May 2019. Concerns were expressed that Members would be without their iPads, which included access to emails and other documents, for too great a period and queried whether this was necessary.

The Senior Governance Officer informed Members that the Governance Manager had been made aware of these concerns and was looking at options for reducing the time and providing other options for Members to ensure that their iPads were updated in a timely manner prior to the election. Reissuing iPads to returning

Members that are re-elected as soon as possible following the election was also being looked into.

It was noted that when Members are requested to return their iPads by a particular date they will be given information on the benefits of having their iPads updated and the rationale for the request. However, if Members decided not to return their iPad as requested the Governance Team would not enforce this unless the Member was not re-elected.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

37/18 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Member Development Working Group would be held on Wednesday, 3 April 2019 at 10.00 am in Chamber 1, District Council Offices, 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth.
