

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

10 MAY 2018

Present:-

Councillors M Asvachin, A Connett, R Gilbert, R Hosking and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors B Parsons and A Eastman

1 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March be signed as a correct record.

2 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

3 **Member Development Opportunities update**

The Head of Scrutiny updated Members on proposals to review the policy for Member attendance at external courses and conferences, which would be submitted to Procedures Committee in July 2018. If agreed, the new process would allow Members to apply for and attend a wider range of courses, relevant to their councillor role.

The new process would be undertaken as a pilot initially and Members would need to engage in personal development interviews to identify specific training needs in order for the training to be approved. Members would also be required to share their learning with other Members following training.

Members discussed:

- The benefits of attending a range of free courses provided by the Local Government Association, whilst acknowledging that the associated travel and accommodation could still be costly;
- The role of officers in recommending particular courses relevant to the roles or training needs of Members;
- That if demand for a particular course or subject area was high, it could be more beneficial to look at providing this training in house through the Shared Service.

4 **Working in a Political Environment course for officers**

The Member Development Officer reported on the Working in a Political Environment course for officers, which focussed on the role of Members, different approaches to working and practical issues such as agenda publishing timescales. The course had recently been delivered to the Council's team of Personal Assistants and the Children's Services Leadership Team, and arrangements were being made to deliver the course for Senior Management in Adult Social Care.

The Member Development Officer asked Members to feedback on their experiences of working with officers and to provide suggestions for future training sessions. Members suggested:

- That officers be advised to keep Cabinet and Council reports shorter and more succinct;
- That having Members present at these training sessions could provide an opportunity for officers and Members to have more informal conversations, which could be beneficial;
- That in the case of ongoing local projects, that officers be asked to provide Members with regular updates to enable them to report back to their Parish Councils.

5 Personal Development Plans

The Member Development Officer reported that Personal Development Plans continued to be valued by many Members and that further personal development interviews would be scheduled for the Autumn.

6 Learning and Development

(a) IT training

The Member Development Officer reported that IT training sessions for Members, held in Bellair, had been scheduled for 1.15pm on full Council days. These sessions were aimed at upskilling Members in a range of IT applications, starting with Microsoft Outlook and Skype on 24th May.

The Member Development Officer also updated on the rollout of Microsoft Office 365 which was ongoing.

Members raised concerns about the impact of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), coming into effect later this month, on their work as councillors. The Head of Scrutiny undertook to review the guidance and training available in this area and provide Members with more detail.

(b) Scrutiny Masterclasses

The Head of Scrutiny reported that recent Scrutiny Masterclasses had seen higher numbers of Members attending than in previous months.

Members reported that these sessions are highly valued by Scrutiny Members and that providing greater advanced warning of the topics to be presented would help with scheduling and attendance. The Head of Scrutiny undertook to endeavour to do this where possible and confirmed that the Member Development mailbox calendar would be used to record details of and send invitations in relation to upcoming training, including Scrutiny Masterclasses and the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Standing Overview Group session on the Sustainable Transformation Plan.

(c) Briefings before full Council

The Head of Scrutiny reported that a Member briefing on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse was scheduled for the morning of full Council on 24th May. Members were encouraged to put forward any suggestions for future briefings.

(d) Shared Service

The Member Development Officer updated Members on the training delivered through the Shared Service. There had been high levels of uptake of the Developing Your Leadership Potential course, and the upcoming 21st Century Councillor course delivered by SW Councils provided an opportunity for Members to get up to speed on a number of relevant areas including Community Leadership, Troubled Families and GDPR. Full details available at the following [link](#):

http://www.swcouncils.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=339&tt=swra&eventStatus=list&eventAction=view&eventId=2854

7 Dates of Future Meetings

Members noted the dates of future meetings, as shown in the calendar of meetings at <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1> as
Thursday 27 September 2018 at 10.30am
Tuesday 5th February 2019 at 10.30am

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.40 am