

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

12 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present:-

Councillors B Parsons (Chairman), M Asvachin, K Ball, A Connett, R Gilbert, R Hosking, D Sellis and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors P Twiss

* **1** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017 be signed as a correct record.

* **2** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items raised as a matter of urgency.

* **3** **Introduction to Member Development**

The Committee received an update on the role of the Member Development Steering Group and the work it did to support Members.

M Geare (Member Development Officer) reminded the Committee of the Terms of Reference which included agreeing approaches to identifying and meeting learning and development needs to ensure that they were meeting individual and corporate requirements, to collect views from fellow councillors on learning and development issues and to feedback on the achievement of the member development strategy to their groups, to be aware of what learning and development was planned, based on meeting individual and organisational needs, and the impacts and benefits of learning and development activities and also to support and influence the achievement of the standards required for accreditation under the SW charter for Member Development

Alongside the terms of reference, the Committee noted that the group ensured that a range of learning and development opportunities were provided which ensured that individual learning needs were met, enabled members to deliver the council's statutory and corporate obligations, objectives and priorities, fulfilled the requirements of a modern council, were owned and valued by members of the council, met with equal opportunities policies and were evaluated to ensure that value was being added

The Steering Group met up to 4 times per year.

M Geare also outlined the range of opportunities provided for Members as part of the induction programmes and the ongoing Member Development Programme, which was embedded within Council processes.

She explained, in particular, the one to one interview process, learning plans, the role of the shared service and the strengths of this service.

Members further noted that the Council had achieved the South West Charter for Member Development Charter Plus accreditation in 2012 and were re-accredited in 2016. This was built on the main Charter requirements (achieved in 2008) and was intended for councils who

wanted an additional challenge to further improve their Councillor development and support arrangements.

In discussion Members asked the following questions and raised the following issues:

- That committee specific training could be made more bespoke, taking into account Members prior knowledge and experience;
- Guidance for new Members on the expectations of the role and workload management would be helpful;
- The opportunity for the Member Development Steering Group to have a role in developing future Member Induction schedules;
- That both local Members and Members of the Development Management Committee would benefit from guidance on meeting with applicants and other parties;
- That both the online staff directory and the Democratic Services and Scrutiny team can be used as a resource by Members for signposting;
- The excellent quality of training provided through the LGA's Leadership Academy and the benefit of encouraging uptake among Members.

* 4 **Review of the Member Development Strategy 2017-2021**

Members considered the Member Development Strategy 2017 – 2021.

M Geare circulated the revised Member Development Policy for 2017 – 2021. This outlined that Local Government was rapidly changing and members undertook a variety of complex roles.

The Policy outlined the key principles, how these would be delivered, the strategic direction, election information, induction programmes, the identification of learning needs, the delivery of learning and development and how activities would be commissioned to meet individual and corporate development priorities, evaluation, the SW Charter for Member Development, the Devon Shared Member Development Service, support and implementation, access to Development Opportunities and the Member Development Budget.

RESOLVED that the Policy be endorsed, with the addition of a reference to the LGA Leadership Academy under bullet point two of the Key Principles.

* 5 **Induction 2017 - Review and Feedback**

Members noted that the first induction day had taken place on 12 May 2017 and had included welcomes and introductions, including a session from an outgoing councillor, and a strategic overview from the Chief Executive to include an understanding of the services provided by the Council and of the challenges faced.

The second induction day, which took place on 25th May 2017 covered the Constitution, Procedures and the Council's Ethical Framework and three workshops covering locality budgets, Member development and support for Members.

A meet and greet with Chief Officers and Heads of Service had also taken place on these dates.

A programme of post induction training (including committee specific training) was underway and ongoing.

Discussions covered:

- Positive feedback had been received from Members in relation to the two induction days and attendance had been good;
- Committee specific training had seen a lower attendance;

- The need for training sessions to be focussed and succinct and for questions to be managed;
- The highly valued support provided by the independent advisor working with Children's Scrutiny;
- The potential for Member training on questioning techniques, particularly to support the work of Scrutiny Committees.

* **6** **Doing What Matters**

S Cretney (Organisational Change Manager) attended the meeting to update the Steering Group on the current work stream 'Doing what matters' which was a piece of work encompassing the purposeful systems work and the new strategic plan.

Members noted that the focus of the purposeful systems work was to understand how the Council can make systemic changes which will truly make a difference to Devon's citizens and enable the Council and partners to do things better, putting the citizen at the heart of everything we do.

Members discussed the role of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in contributing to this work in the future.

RESOLVED that a briefing be scheduled on this topic at a future Council meeting to provide all Members with a strategic overview of this work.

* **7** **Learning and Development**

Members considered the proposals to run an event on 'Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse', the aim of which was to focus on the practical application of 'what do I need to know' or 'what do I need to look out for' rather than a strategic approach.

Members welcomed the proposal and suggested that the event could be widened to encompass a number of other issues including, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and safeguarding.

Issues regarding the personal safety of Councillors and conflict resolution skills were also discussed and Members noted that guidance was expected shortly from the LGA on this issue.

* **8** **Briefings Prior to Full Council**

K Strahan (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager) advised the group that there were opportunities prior to the full council meetings for officers / organisations to update members on important matters that might affect them or information they might require in order to carry out their duties.

Future briefings were scheduled from Credit Unions and looking at the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

Corporate Parenting was now a regular feature of the Council Day procedures and took place at 10.00am in the DAW room for up to one and a half hours (an extended timeframe since October 2015).

* **9** **Shared Service Update**

M Geare advised that an email had recently been circulated to all Members advertising an upcoming Communication Skills session provided by the Shared Service. Personal Development interviews were also in the process of being arranged with Members.

A meeting was planned with South West Councils to consider how the Shared Service could work more closely with them to deliver Councillor training.

* **10** **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
18 January 2018 @ 10.30am
10 May 2018 @ 10.30am

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.55 am