

## MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

18 JANUARY 2018

Present:-

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

Apologies:-

Councillors R Gilbert

**11      Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017 be signed as a correct record.

**12      Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**13      Personal Development Plans**

The Member Development Officer reported that fourteen Members had undertaken one to one Personal Development Plan meetings, nine of which were Members newly elected in May 2017.

A number of development areas were identified through these meetings including:

- Leadership skills
- Time management
- Speed reading
- Communication skills
- Data protection
- Budget and finance
- Waste and quarrying (specific to Development Management Committee Members)
- Working in a commissioning environment
- IT skills

These development areas were in the main being addressed through the Member Induction programme, specific Committee training, Scrutiny Masterclasses and via the Shared Service.

Members of the Steering Group commented on the value of the one to one sessions and support provided, particularly for new Members, meanwhile noting that take up of these sessions was relatively low. The Member Development Officer undertook to investigate further the reasons for low take up and offer up some additional dates for one to ones in the Spring.

**14      Learning and Development**

The Head of Scrutiny presented the new schedule of Member Development which collated all recent Member training including Scrutiny Masterclasses, briefings before full Council and Shared Service events, alongside planned and upcoming training and development sessions.

Members welcomed the new schedule, which was intended to give Members and Officers a clearer understanding of all Member development and training activity across the Council.

The Steering Group also discussed:

- The challenge for Members new to the Council in managing their time and developing a baseline understanding of all the Council's responsibilities and services, and that understandably many new Members chose to focus on the areas most relevant to the Committees on which they serve;
- The support and focus provided through Personal Development Plan one to one meetings which could help Members manage their workload;
- The value of signposting and advice from the Democratic Services and Scrutiny team on Council services and procedures and of Locality Leads on local issues;
- The need to ensure that training events are better attended, by considering issues such as scheduling, and the potential for live streaming of sessions and/or webinars;
- The need to ensure that financial and budget scrutiny sessions are meeting the needs of Members new to local government finance as well as more experienced Members.

The Member Development Officer reported that a training session on Time Management was being held 26<sup>th</sup> January and that a Member IT skills survey had been undertaken to inform future learning for Members in this area.

The Member Development Officer also reported on training available through the Local Government Association (LGA) including their Leadership Academy and children's and adult's social care.

Members discussed:

- The importance of taking up free training and development opportunities with LGA, while noting there will be associated travel accommodation costs for most attendances;
- The value of undertaking training outside of 'County Hall' and the networking and shared learning this brings, while noting the potential of the Shared Service to offer many of these benefits;
- The benefit to the Council of Members undertaking leadership and high level courses where appropriate, acknowledging limited training budgets and the difficulties around measuring this added value;
- The potential of taking a more systematic approach to Member training through group nominations and decision making through the Member Development Steering Group for training requests.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair and the Member Development Officer investigate further the potential for taking the points raised by the Steering Group in this area forward.

## 15 **Briefings Prior to Full Council**

The Head of Scrutiny reported that at the last Council meeting, a briefing had been received on Council and Committee Governance and Procedures. Future briefings were to be held on NPS property services (February County Council day) and on the Council's Domestic & Sexual Violence & Abuse Strategy (May County Council day).

Corporate Parenting remained 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.

## 16 **Shared Service Update**

The Member Development Officer provided an update of the Shared Service advising that Mid Devon District Council had recently joined the partnership. The service was also exploring the potential to deliver leadership training for Members, in partnership with South West Councils, which would reduce costs and widen networking opportunities.

The Shared Service would also be hosting a '21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor' event on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018, at County Hall, Exeter. The Shared Service would have a number of free places available for Members and further information about this event would be circulated in due course.

**17      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>

10 May 2018  
27 September 2018  
5 February 2019  
30 May 2019

all beginning at 10.30am.

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.40 am