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To: The Chair and Members
of the Member
Development Steering
Group

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

Date: 27 January 2021

Contact: Charlie Fisher 01392 383691

Email: charlie.fisher@devon.gov.uk

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Thursday, 4th February, 2021

A meeting of the Member Development Steering Group is to be held on the above date at 10.30 am at Virtual Meeting to consider the following matters.

Phil Norrey
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART ONE - OPEN COMMITTEE

1 Apologies

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

To agree the previously circulated minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2020 as a correct record.

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OR REVIEW

4 Induction 2021

Head of Scrutiny to update members on preparations for the induction of members after the 2021 County Council Elections and discuss further actions.

5 Member Wellbeing Survey (Pages 5 - 12)

Head of Scrutiny to update members on the results of the recent Member Wellbeing Survey and discuss further actions.

The report containing results, analysis and suggested action points is attached to the agenda.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

6 Learning and Development

Officers to appraise Members of the learning and development activity that has taken place over the past year, despite restrictions around the COVID-19 Pandemic.

7 Dates of Future Meetings

As shown in the calendar of meetings at
<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

The next meeting is scheduled for 16th September 2021 at 10.30am

PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Nil

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Induction Loop available



MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

15 OCTOBER 2020

Present:-

Councillors B Parsons (Chair), M Asvachin, J Berry, R Hosking, D Sellis and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors A Connett and P Twiss

Also in Attendance

33 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2020 be signed as a correct record.

34 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

35 Learning and Development

Officers updated Members on the training and Member development that had taken place over the summer during the lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic period.

There had been a reduced timetable of training and development opportunities, in part due to the pandemic situation, but also reflecting the proximity of upcoming elections which were due to take place in May 2021.

A number of Virtual Surgeries had been held to provide information and advice to Members in supporting their communities through the pandemic, covering areas such as Community Safety, Library Services, support for young people and supporting for those experiencing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Following the move to online Committee meetings, Scrutiny Masterclasses were not currently being held on the day of Scrutiny Committees (as was usual practice), but some Masterclass sessions were being held to address issues on an ad-hoc basis, including a Health Scrutiny session on Covid-19, where scrutiny Members from Plymouth, Torbay and the Devon districts were also invited to attend. Future Masterclasses were planned addressing children's and adult mental health, and on CAMHS and Autism services. The Chair and Vice Chair of Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee were also

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receiving regular briefings and updates on the pandemic situation from the Director of Public Health and the Acute Trusts.

Scrutiny Standing Overview Groups (SOG) continued to be held covering a range of topics including the Exeter Transport Plan, Food Poverty, Ofsted outcome and the Improvement Plan and Covid-19 management and response.

Members welcomed the training and briefing sessions that had been arranged over this period and commented on the usefulness of the SOG meetings to consider areas such as the Ofsted outcome. Vicky Church, Scrutiny Officer, undertook to provide Members of the group with a list of training that had taken place since the beginning of lockdown.

Members also raised issues over accessing the 'mandatory' training through the DEL online system and Marion Geare, Member Development Officer confirmed that the training was mandatory for members of staff, but optional for elected Members, noting however that many of the areas covered would be very useful for Members. The Member Development Officer undertook to feedback some of the issues Members had experienced accessing the system and that more support may be needed.

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Black Lives Matter

Jo Hooper, Equality and Diversity Officer appraised Members of the Council's work over the summer in response to the Black Lives Matter movement including:

- The development of a pilot reverse mentoring programme where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff would mentor senior leaders and managers, with the aim of more widely sharing the lived experience of being BAME in Devon with leaders; similar schemes in the NHS had been successful; currently 10 mentors had been recruited and a training programme was being developed alongside mentee recruitment;
- The Council's new HR Management system I-trent was being used to increase workforce data on ethnicity; once this data was better understood consideration could be given to positive action recruitment programmes which could specifically target BAME communities;
- BAME staff networks were already in place and continued to be supported;
- There had been a focus on getting staff, Members and communities engaged in relevant events and activities; this had provided a greater challenge over the summer due to the Covid-19 pandemic; the Exeter resect festival was cancelled and other events had moved online including events recognising the contribution of the Windrush generation and range of events celebrating Black History month through Zoom which focussed on black history in Devon and Exeter.

Opportunities for Member development and training on BAME issues were discussed, and while it was possible to organise formal training, Members were encouraged to take up personal development opportunities by engaging with community events, getting to know local BAME communities and building equality and diversity issues into training in other areas such as mental health.

It was also suggested that a BAME mentoring scheme for Members, joining together with other local authorities, could be a really beneficial way for Members to build skills and confidence on equality issues around race and ethnicity. The Head of Scrutiny undertook to take this suggestion forward through scrutiny networks and the Local Government Association to see what could be put in place.

37 **Member Wellbeing**

The Member Development Officer outlined the wellbeing support that had been put in place for Members through the pandemic period, which included the offer of one to one sessions, a reminder of the wellbeing resources available on Inside Devon and the offer of running a resilience session for Members. These messages had been reiterated to Members through a number of different channels.

The Chair greatly endorsed the support being offered to Members and encouraged all Members to be proactive in looking after their own wellbeing, and to take up the offers made by the Council.

38 **Induction 2021**

With elections scheduled and still expected in May 2021, the Member Development Officer outlined the usual approach to Member Induction, which included two full days of induction events held shortly after the election itself, followed by a range of training, briefings and development opportunities held over the summer and into September.

With the current pandemic situation, it was unknown as to the extent to which these events may have to take place online, but decisions around this would be taken nearer the time. Members were supportive of providing online learning as part of the overall offer.

Members were supportive of delivering induction training and development over a number of months as in previous years, noting that there may need to be additional IT/Microsoft Teams training for new Members, who may have varied IT experience. A focus on the organisational structure of the council, and how the various services interact with each other and partner organisations was considered to be a key element of training for newly elected Members.

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39 **Shared Service Update**

The Member Development Officer advised that the majority of the shared service partners had now ceased contributing financially to the Shared Service, but it had been agreed by the Council's leadership that in the short term at least, Devon district councils would continue to be able to draw on the usual services. Local authorities from outside of the Devon County Council area would need to continue to pay for services, and as such Torbay Council was the only remaining authority continuing to contribute financially.

40 **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>

The next meeting of the Member Development Steering Group was scheduled for Thursday 4th February 2021.

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.40 am

Member Wellbeing Survey Member Development Steering Group

Introduction

After a request from the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee, a member wellbeing survey was created and ran from 8th December 2020 to 4th January 2021.

The survey asked five questions:

1. Which of the following describes how you currently feel?
2. What are you doing to support your overall health and wellbeing?
3. How well supported by DCC do you feel at this time?
4. What one thing could the Council do to support you better at this time?
5. In the spirit of celebrating what has worked well, is there anything that you would like to share that has helped at this time?

Questions 1, 2 and 3 were multiple choice answers while 4 and 5 were open questions where respondents could input their own answers.

Just under a third of members responded (17 out of 60).

Highlights

- Majority of respondents are currently feeling 'ok' or 'good'.
- All respondents are doing something to support their health and wellbeing with exercise and keeping in contact with family and friends being the most popular options.
- Majority of respondents do feel 'Extremely' or 'Somewhat' well supported by DCC.
- Majority of respondents did not suggest something the council could do to support them better at the time of taking the survey.
- Some individual responses did show some extra support could be given and targeted to individual need.

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Positives

Overall, the majority of members feel positive, supported by DCC and are actively ensuring they are supporting their own health and wellbeing. At the time of taking the survey, the majority of respondents felt positive about how they currently feel (14 out of 17). As shown in Figure 1, 59% stated ‘I am good and feel positive’ and 23% stated “I feel ok and hopeful”. Additionally, 12% of respondents stated “I am ok, but concerned” which was a neutral answer understanding both positives and concerns.

Q1 - WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES HOW YOU CURRENTLY FEEL?

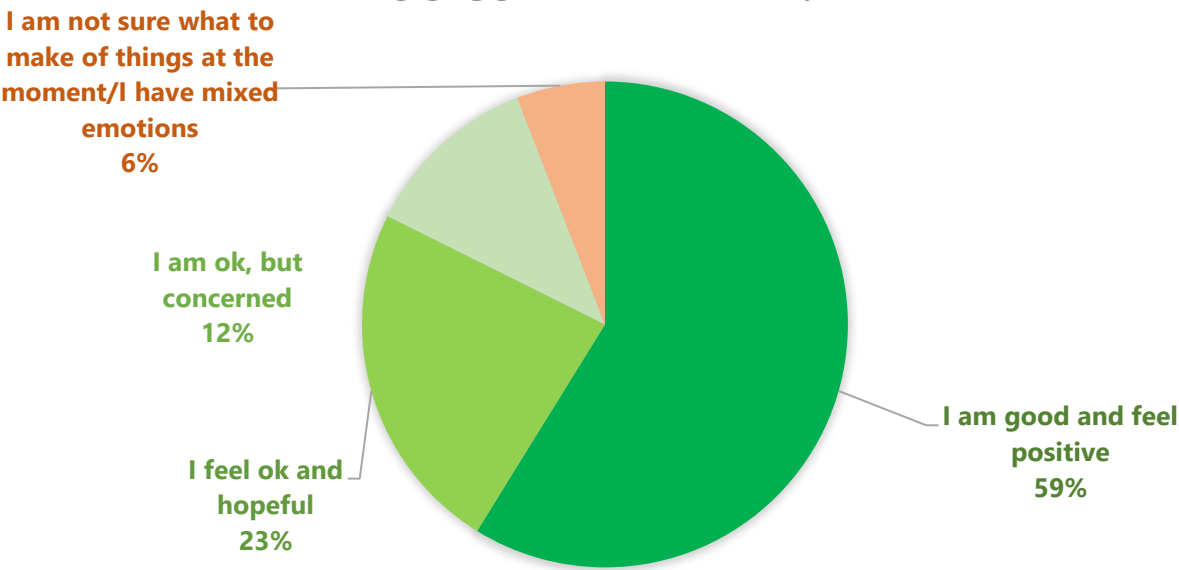


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the responses to Question 1 - Which of the following describes how you currently feel?

Q2 - WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO SUPPORT YOUR OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLBEING? (TICK AS MANY AS APPLY)

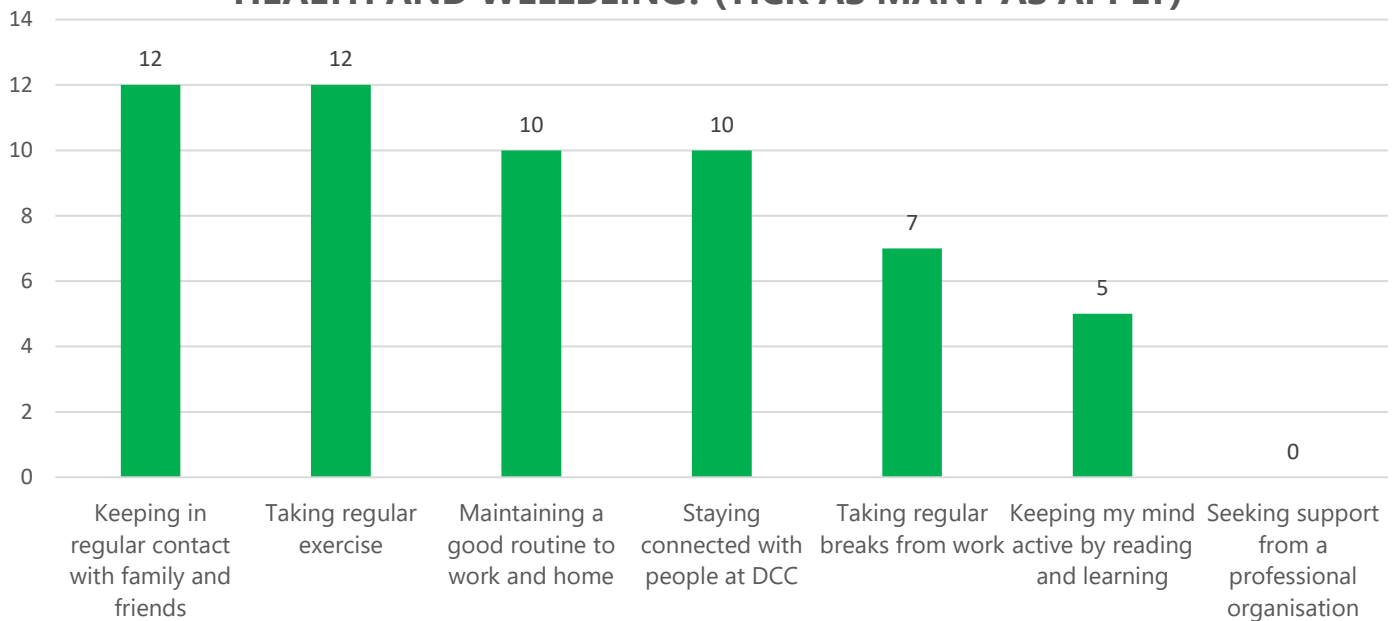


Figure 2: Bar chart showing the responses to Question 2 – What are you doing to support your overall health and wellbeing?

The overall positive response to Q1 may be evidence by the number of respondents who are taking individual steps to support their overall health and wellbeing. All respondents in Q2 stated they were doing something to support their wellbeing and no respondents stated they were seeking help from professional organisations. Respondents could choose as many options as applied to them and this meant 56 responses were received in total with many respondents picking multiple options with 6 options being the largest chosen by an individual.

As show in Figure 2, “Taking regular exercise” and “Keeping in contact with family and friends” were the most chosen option (12 each). In addition, respondents highlighted the importance of keeping in contact with others as “staying connected with people at DCC” was also a widely selected option to support respondent’s wellbeing (10). Overall, keeping in contact with others, either friends, family or DCC colleagues, was stated by 39% of respondents as a way to support their wellbeing.

Respondents are also ensuring they have a routine in place between work and home (10) and taking regular breaks from work (7). Overall, these two answers made up 30% of responses. In addition, 5 respondents selected “keeping my mind active by reading and learning”, showing respondents do take time away from work to do other things to support their wellbeing.

In addition, respondents felt well support by DCC at the time of taking the survey. As evidenced in Figure 3, 70% of respondents felt supported choosing either “Extremely well” or “Somewhat well” as their answer. No respondents chose “Extremely not well” which can be taken as a positive from this survey.

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Q3 - HOW WELL SUPPORTED BY DCC DO YOU FEEL AT THIS TIME?

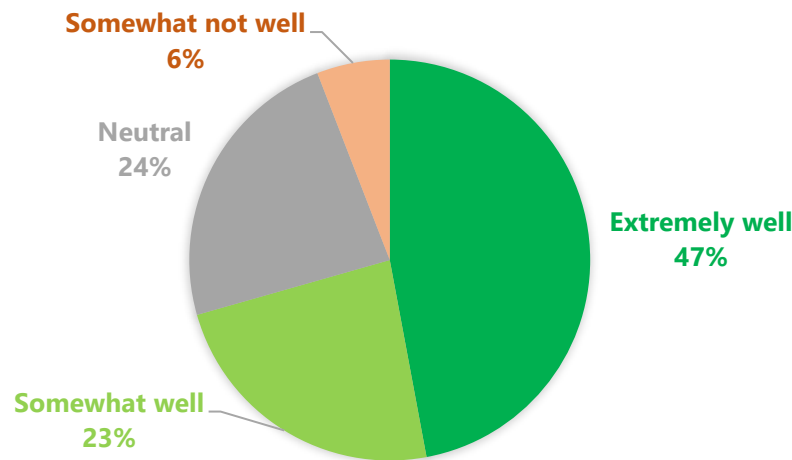


Figure 3: Pie Chart showing the responses to Question 3 - How well supported by DCC do you feel at this time?

Finally, Question 5 asked respondents in “the spirit of celebrating what has worked well” to share what has helped them. 19 responses were given, with some respondents offering multiple responses. Some of these responses are shown in Figure 4. Categorised into similar responses, respondents felt technology, remote meetings and the use of MS Teams had helped them to continue and carry out their role as a councillor (8 responses). Respondents stated it is “**revolutionary**”, “**working well**” as a platform and helping the environment by reducing travel. Although, respondents did indicate they would like to return to in-person meetings at some point in the future, stressing the importance of “**real human contact**” and missing interaction with colleagues at County Hall.

In addition, respondents stated communications and support for DCC and Officers has helped them. 6 Respondents answered with compliments for DCC and Staff stating, for example calling the officers “**terrific**” and stating there has been “**excellent comms and info**”. Other answers to Question 5 stated that carrying out hobbies and exercising have been “**rewarding**” and successful ways to help them at this time.

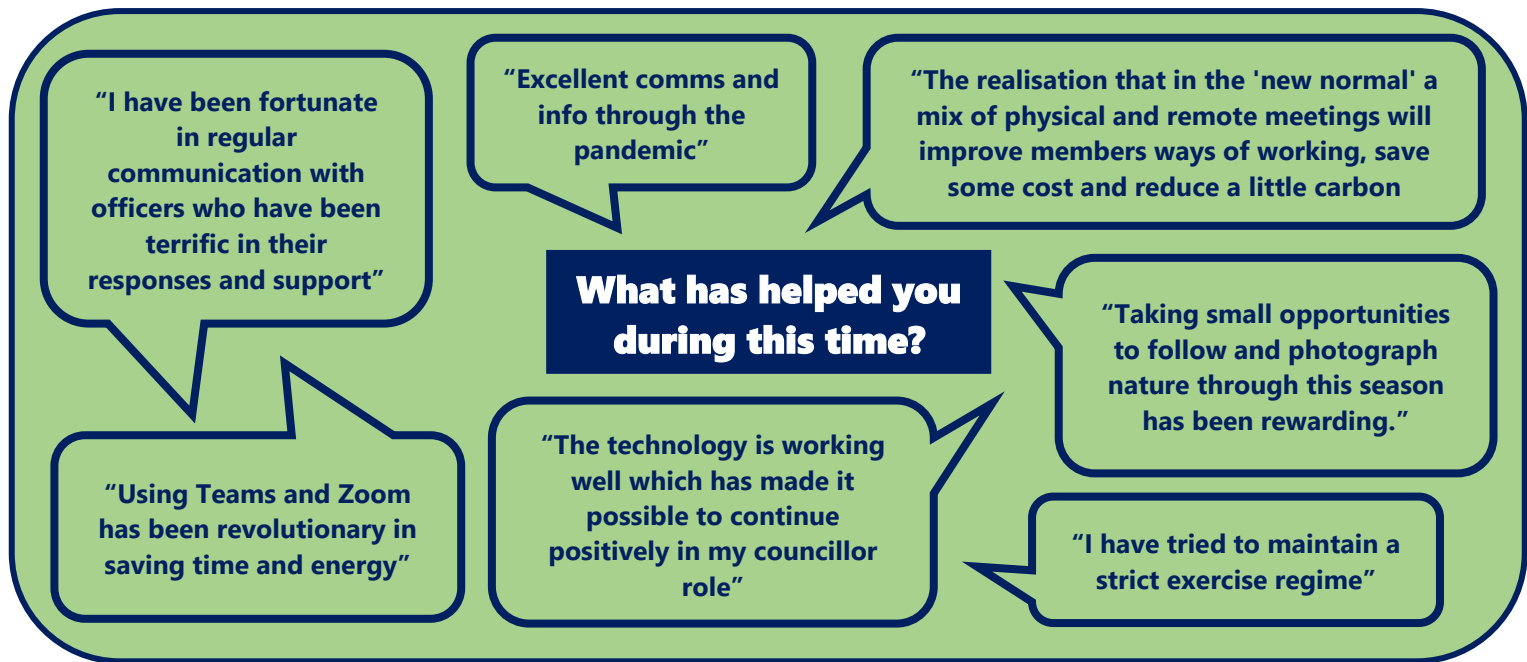


Figure 4: Graphic showing some of the responses to Question 5 - In the spirit of celebrating what has worked well, is there anything that you would like to share that has helped at this time?

Concerns

While the majority of respondents did feel positive and supported, there were some respondents who did not feel the same.

For example, as shown in Figure 1, 1 respondent did not feel positive and picked "I am not sure what to make of things at the moment/I have mixed emotions" as their feeling at the time of taking the survey.

1 Respondent to Question 3, as shown in Figure 3, stated they felt "Somewhat not well" supported, showing that support still needs to be given and individual members may need extra support. Furthermore, 24% stated "neutral", showing further support may still be needed for some.

Finally, 1 respondent to Question 5 showed that some members are struggling with the role and the impact of the pandemic on their personal lives and so extra targeted support should be considered.

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Suggested Improvements

Question 4 asked for respondents to suggest one thing the Council could do to support them further. The responses to this question have been categorised and shown in Figure 5. The plurality of respondents (8/17) did not offer a suggestion to what the council could do to support them better and their responses ranged from “no suggestion” to “I’m fine” to “Leave me alone”. However, there were still some respondents who did offer some suggested improvements:

- 3 respondents highlighted the need to keep meeting times down and ensuring shorter, focused meetings while the council meets virtually.
- 3 respondents suggested a need to keep in contact with members with a suggestion of a monthly email to “ensure they are ok”. The need for this to ensure “individual member need” is met. In addition, 1 respondent suggested a MS teams social event to stay in contact.
- 2 respondents responded with other suggestions which did not categorise as the suggestion was not repeated or was a suggestion that is outside of the Steering Group’s remit. For example, lengthening the hours in the day.

Q4 - WHAT ONE THING COULD THE COUNCIL DO TO SUPPORT YOU BETTER AT THIS TIME?

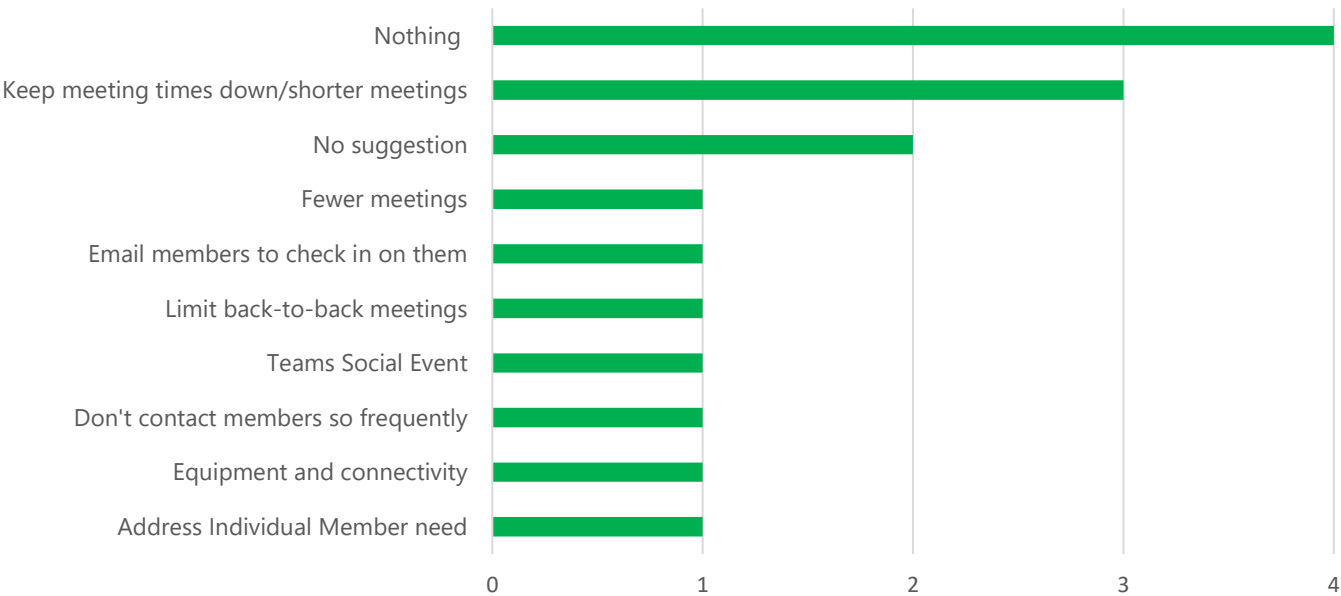


Figure 5: Graph showing the responses to Question 4 – What one thing could the council do to support you better at this time?

Action Points from the Member Wellbeing Survey

Suggestion	Action	Agency
This survey was carried out at a festive time of year, this may have affected the strength of feeling to some of the answers.	Repeating the survey at another time may lead to more revealing answers from Members.	Member Development decision Scrutiny team to carry out
Officers and members to continue the efforts to have shorter, more focussed meetings.	Refreshing Member awareness of good practice at Scrutiny meetings (fewer items, focussed questioning) Work to keep agendas short and focussed.	Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Dem Services /Scrutiny Officers
Publicising the results of the survey and follow up action so that Members are clear what support is available should they need it.	Repeat the Member Wellbeing newsletter sent round combined with the results of the survey.	Member Development Dem Services/ Scrutiny Officers

