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

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

Date: 8 September 2021

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MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Thursday, 16th September, 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 Thursday 4th February 2021 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 Introduction to Member Development

To receive an overview of Member Development at Devon County Council and the role and purpose of the Member Development Steering Group.

5 Member Development Strategy 2021-2025 (Pages 5 - 10)

To review and agree the Member Development Strategy 2021-2025.

6 Induction 2021 Review

To review and give feedback on the induction programme to date.

7 Member Engagement with Children's Ofsted

To discuss how all Members can help with the Children's Services Improvement Journey.

8 Personal Development Interviews

To introduce Personal Development Interviews and the benefits of the process.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

9 Member Wellbeing Survey (Pages 11 - 20)

To update members on the results of the Member Wellbeing Survey and discuss further actions.

10 Shared Member Development Network

To receive feedback on the Shared Member Development Network and the opportunities this can present for Devon County Council.

11 Working in a Political Environment

To give an overview of the training given to Officers in order to work effectively with Members.

12 Dates of Future Meetings

As shown in the calendar of meetings at

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

15th February 2022 at 10.30am

26th May 2022 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

4 FEBRUARY 2021

Present:-

Councillors B Parsons (Chair), M Asvachin, K Ball, J Berry, L Hellyer, R Hosking, D Sellis, C Slade and P Twiss

Apologies:-

Councillors A Connett, A Eastman and M Shaw

41 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2020 be signed as a correct record.

42 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

Councillor Parsons passed on his thanks to officers for their work over the term.

43 **Induction 2021**

Camilla de Bernhardt Lane, Head of Scrutiny, updated Members on preparations for the induction of Members after the 2021 County Council Elections.

Officers are working on the basis the elections will happen in May 2021 but awaiting confirmation from the Government.

The Council has always prided itself on delivering quality induction programmes, and ongoing training, for both new and returning members. In line with the Council's commitment to training and development a programme is being developed based on previous experiences of induction and best practice. This included:

- the need for the programme to be spread out over a longer period of time to allow Members to take stock;
- during the first month, the main strategic sessions should be covered;

Agenda Item 2

2

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

4/02/21

- through the second month, members should obtain a greater insight into the working of the Council and the Service Streams and commence any committee specific training.

This year we will need to be reflective and adaptive to accommodate the necessities of on-line learning options as well as any face-to-face meetings that may be possible.

The objectives for the programme will be;

- to welcome new and existing Members to the Council following the election, and to make and maintain connections, particularly if still working remotely.
- to provide a strategic overview of what the Council does in broad terms, and develop the functional awareness to carry out duties in line with committee appointments.
- Skills development (chairing skills, questioning skills etc).

Officers will incorporate the new virtual/remote way of working into the induction programme to ensure it is engaging, interactive and using the functionality of MS Teams. Material will be recorded so new members can watch it in their own time if they are unable to attend specific sessions.

Members discussed the need to build relationships with new colleagues, ensuring the new Cabinet and Senior Officers are visible to members and ensuring recorded material stays up-to-date and relevant.

44 Member Wellbeing Survey

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

The survey looked at five questions and ran over the Christmas period. Around 1/3 of members responded to the survey (17 out of 60).

Highlights included:

- The 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.
- The majority of respondents to feel 'Extremely' or 'Somewhat' well supported by Devon County Council.
- The majority of respondents did not suggest something the council could do to support them better at the time of responding.

- Some individual responses did show some extra support could be given and targeted to individual need.

Members discussed and had the opportunity to share their opinions, talk openly and honestly about their personal circumstances, feelings, struggles and how they have found this time. Many highlighted the pressures facing them as councillors during this time and the increased workload they have faced. Members discussed the increased expectations of them and demand for their assistance as community leaders and concern about some of the tone of some of the correspondence received by constituents.

Members appreciated the new remote/virtual way of working as a way to increase productivity and reducing travel time to meetings but did acknowledge the importance of meeting colleagues in person at County Hall to build relationships.

Members and officers discussed ways Members could connect with each other and support each other's wellbeing in the coming months.

Action: Repeat a Member Wellbeing Survey before the end of the term to ensure the results can benefit members elected in the new term.

Action: To consider how best to share Member's experiences and successful techniques for managing their wellbeing.

45 **Learning and Development**

The Head of Scrutiny shared with Members the learning and development activity that has taken place over the past year, despite restrictions around the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The activities included Standing Overview Groups, Masterclasses, Conferences, Briefings and Communities Virtual Surgeries.

Member reflected on the significant opportunities members have still had for positive learning and development and active scrutiny and policy development role. Members highlighted how the work of the council and its committees did not stop and seamlessly transitioned to remote working when many other local authorities struggled to maintain active councillor involvement and cancelled meetings and development opportunities.

Action: Learning and development activity to be shared with members along with links to any recorded sessions.

Agenda Item 2

4

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

4/02/21

Members noted the upcoming Local Government Association Event, The Role of Data in Local Government on 25th February 2021.

Members acknowledged the resolution from the Children's Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25th January 2021 which referred to Active Bystander Training for all members.

46 **Dates of Future Meetings**

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

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

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.55 am



Devon County Council Member Development Policy 2021-2025

1. Introduction

The world of local government is rapidly changing and can place exceptional demands on its leadership. Members undertake a variety of complex roles and play a critical part in shaping future services for the benefit of the community and determining how these are delivered.

Devon County Council is committed to supporting the development of all Elected Members providing a programme of development opportunities that assists individuals to perform effectively in their role both as community leaders and as representatives of the County Council. Members take a leading role in their development both individually by engaging with the process and strategically through the Member Development Steering Group

2. Key Principles

Through the processes in place to deliver Member Development we will ensure that:

- ❖ A comprehensive programme of development will support the delivery of the Council's priorities and meet individual learning needs as they evolve through the life of the Council.
- ❖ Development activities will be consistent with Equality and Diversity policies and deliver best value. They will be organised and delivered to align with core principles and behaviours as well as addressing the skills and knowledge requirements outlined in the Devon Members' Skills Framework and Senior Leadership Framework.
- ❖ Where possible local and national development initiatives will be utilised, including the LGA Leadership Academy, LGA online resource hub and the Shared Member Development Service.
- ❖ Tools are developed, utilised, and evaluated to support the development of elected Members.
- ❖ The process is Member owned and driven through the Member Development Steering Group. Individuals will be encouraged to take an active involvement in their own learning and development.

3. How we deliver this?

Members will always be at different stages in their political careers, skills and knowledge will be different for each individual and their requirements for

Agenda Item 5

development will vary. The learning and development programme will recognise this and assist in their development through the following processes:

3.1 Strategic Direction

The Member Development Steering Group will be responsible for setting the strategic direction for Member Development which will be implemented on their behalf by officers. This cross-party group will be chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Member Development and made up of other members representing geographical areas of Devon and providing political balance. The group will meet at least 3 times per year to discuss all aspects of Member development.

Group leaders will actively encourage party Members to agree personal development plans and participate in development activities. They will also be responsible for identifying suitable nominations for national/local conferences and external training opportunities.

3.2 Prior to Election

A variety of methods will be used to communicate with prospective candidates providing information about the role and how they will be supported should they be successful.

3.3 Induction

A comprehensive Induction Programme will be delivered following elections for new and returning Members. Skills and knowledge will be delivered in a timely manner using a variety of methods to allow for equality of access. The programme will cover the full range of activities that a Member will undertake and will be delivered incrementally to avoid overloading.

Preparations for the induction programme will take place in good time and will be influenced by feedback from the evaluation of the previous induction and good practice from other authorities.

3.4 Identifying development needs

All Members will be offered an annual personal development interview as a tool to identify their personal development needs. Members will be asked to use the Devon Members' Skills Framework to self-assess against, prior to the interview. A personal development plan will be produced for each Member, and this will form the basis of the Annual Members Learning and Development Plan.

Senior Leadership Development will be supported to identify their learning and development needs using the Devon Members Senior Leadership Skills Framework which includes a 360-degree review process

Organisational requirements to provide learning and development to Members will be considered through officer networks, existing committees, and the Member Development Steering Group.

3.5 Delivery of learning and development

Learning and development activities will be commissioned to meet individual committee and corporate development priorities.

- Generic skills to enable effective working as a councillor
- Service driven activities to support corporate priorities and committee roles
- Knowledge to support robust decision making
- Community leadership to enhance the community role
- Advanced development activities to enhance leadership skills
- Skills to meet new ways of working resulting from the changing shape of local government

We will provide learning in a way that meets individual needs through:

- Nationally recognised learning programmes
- Internal learning events
- Scrutiny masterclasses
- Briefings prior to or as part of the committee process
- Self-managed learning both paper and web based
- Officer briefings
- The Devon Shared Member Development Service
- Mentoring and Coaching arrangements

Delivery methods will consider inclusivity, access to learning, subject matter and learning styles offering both, face to face and online delivery and incorporating a variety of delivery methods.

3.6 Evaluation

Evaluation of all learning and development activities will take place against agreed objectives in accordance with the evaluation strategy (Appendix A). Action will be taken to make improvements based upon this feedback.

3.7 SW Charter for Member Development

Charter plus accreditation was achieved in October 2012 and April 2016 and these standards will continue to be applied to the work that we undertake in this field. This followed on from being awarded the SW Charter for Member Development in December 2008. We will continue to seek reaccreditation on a 3 – 4 yearly basis. SW Charter for Member Development is a nationally recognised standard developed by Local Government Improvement and Development and regionally administered by South West Councils.

3.8 Shared Member Development Service

Agenda Item 5

Devon County Council has been a partner of the Shared Member Development Service since 2011 and leads on the organisation and development of the offer provided by this service. We will continue to promote and engage with the service taking up learning and development opportunities provided, using tools developed through the service and sharing best practice.

3.9 Support and implementation

Supported by a Senior Workforce Development Advisor to develop and facilitate a cost-effective member development programme and the Deputy Manager / Head of Scrutiny.

3.10 Access to Development Opportunities

- The Senior Workforce Development Advisor will offer all Members an annual personal development interview to identify individual learning needs.
- Member Learning and Development opportunities will be reported to the Member Development Steering Group for consideration and approval.
- Requests to attend non approved national/local conferences or courses with limited places will be considered in line with the process agreed by the Procedures Committee Minute 33 (5/6/18) requiring the approval of the budget holder, the Head of Democratic Services, in liaison with the Leader of the Council as appropriate and supported by a business case to ensure:
 - There is a fair allocation of opportunity
 - It is aligned with corporate priorities
 - It fits with individual roles and responsibilities
 - There is sufficient budget available to support the request
- Individuals attending the agreed events will need to ensure the:
 - Learning activity is has been identified as part of a personal development interview
 - Learning is shared/disseminated to all Members after the event.
- Information on additional development opportunities and officer briefing sessions will be communicated regularly throughout the year
- All Members should confirm whether or not they will be attending a learning and development session at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the event. In line with good practice Party Whips have asked to be kept informed of any non-attendance on the day, where no explanation or apologies are given.

3.11 Member Development Budget

The DCC Member development budget will be made up from two areas:

- An allocation for Learning and Development administered through Human Resources.
- A small allocation for approved Conferences administered through the office of the County Solicitor.

4. Adoption of DCC Member Development Strategy

The original strategy was approved by Procedures Committee and ratified by full County Council on 08/03/07.

The Member Development Steering Group Committee was first established and appointed at County Council on 25/05/07 to support the implementation of the strategy.

Members were appointed to Member Development Steering group at Full Council 25.06.09 these appointments are made and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Strategy was reviewed and revised in July 2009. approved by Procedures Committee 29.09.09 and ratified by Full Council 10.12.09.

The Strategy was reviewed and updated to a Member Development Policy in March 2013.

The Strategy was reviewed and updated in May 2017

The Strategy has been once again reviewed and is commended for adoption for the New Council with effect from May 2021.

Member Wellbeing Survey

1. 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.

At the Member Development Steering Group meeting of 4th February 2021, Councillors agreed to repeat the survey before the end of the 2017-2021 term and before the 2021 local elections. The survey was repeated and ran from 14th April to 28th April 2021.

The repeated survey asked the same five questions as the original survey:

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?

However, an additional question was asked in order to help officers in preparation for the upcoming induction programme:

6. What can we do to support new Member's wellbeing as part of the induction programme?

Questions 1, 2 and 3 were multiple choice answers while 4, 5 and 6 were open questions where respondents could input their own answers.

More than a third of Councillors (22 out of 60, 36.6%) responded to this survey, compared to 17 Councillors (28.3%) responding to the original survey.

2. Highlights

- Majority of respondents continue to feel positive and 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. Respondents are doing more to support their health and wellbeing compared to the previous survey.
- Large majority of respondents do feel 'Extremely' or 'Somewhat' well supported by DCC, with no respondents feeling not well supported.
- 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.

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

3. Positives

Overall, the majority of Councillors responding to the survey continue to 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 (18 out of 22). As shown in Figure 1, 59% of the respondents to Question 1 stated 'I am good and feel positive' and 23% stated "I feel ok and hopeful". Additionally, 9% of respondents stated "I am ok, but concerned" which was a neutral answer understanding both positives and concerns.

In comparison, to the previous survey, the results are almost identical. Previously 59% of respondents stated, "I am good and feel positive" and 23% stated "I feel ok and hopeful".

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

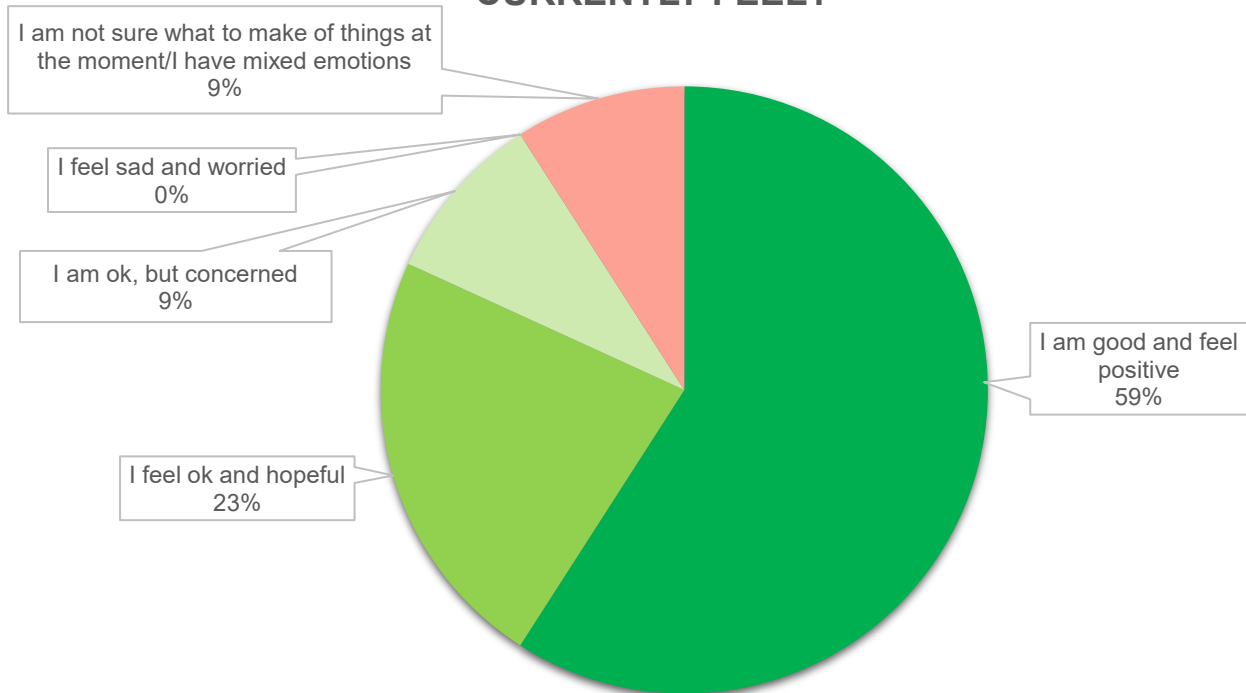


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the responses to Question 1 – Which of the following describes how you currently feel?

Q2 - WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO SUPPORT YOUR OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

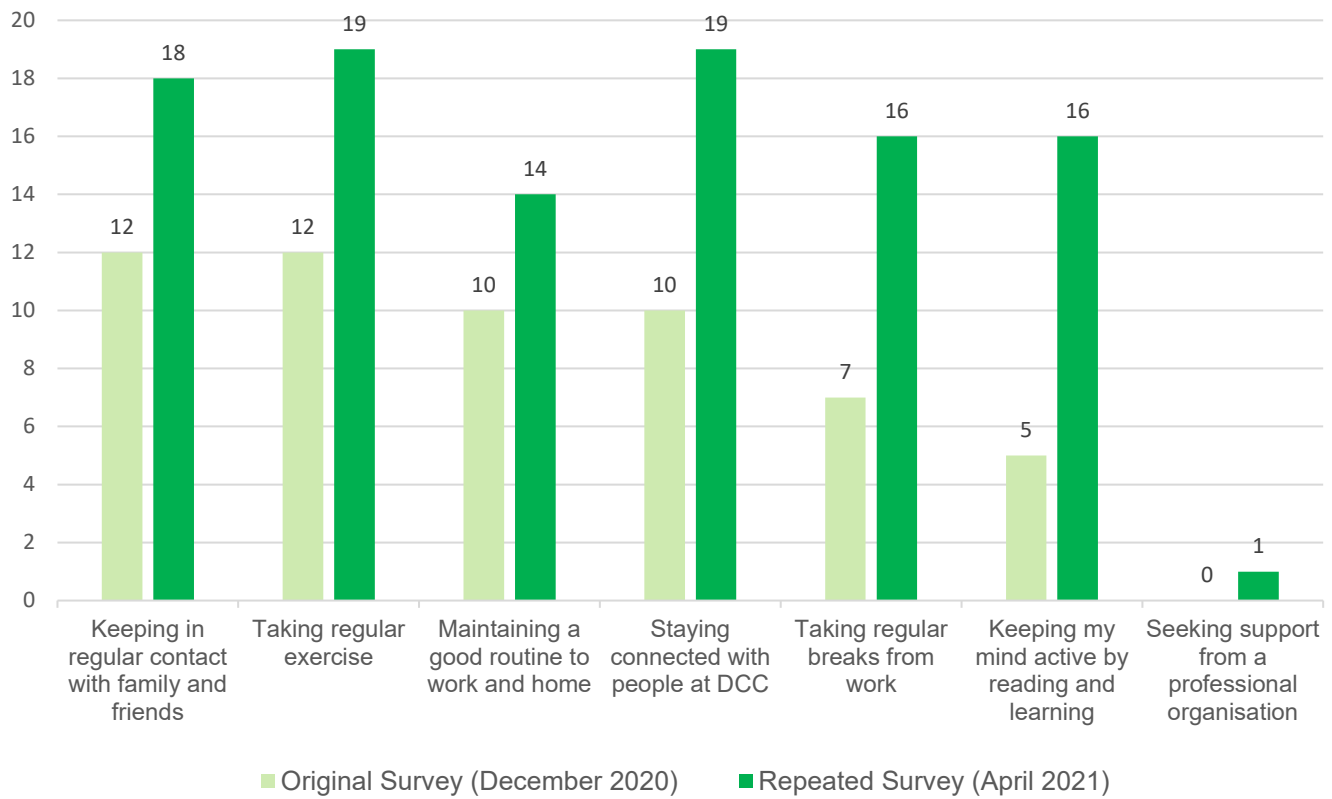


Figure 2: Bar chart showing the responses to Question 2: “What are you doing to support your overall health and wellbeing?” from the original survey and the repeated survey.

Like the previous survey, the overall positive response to Question 1 may be evidenced by the number of respondents who are taking individual steps to support their overall health and wellbeing. All respondents in Question 2 stated they were doing something to support their health and wellbeing.

Respondents could choose as many options as applied to them and this meant 103 responses were received in total with many respondents picking multiple options. In comparison to the 56 responses to the previous survey, it indicates Councillors are doing more to support their wellbeing than previously with all responses being picked as an option more frequently.

Both surveys show that respondents are highlighting the importance of keeping in contact with others and taking regular exercise as the most popular ways to support their wellbeing, making up 54% of responses. Figure 2 shows the responses from the repeated survey in April 2021 with the previous survey’s results shown as a comparison. As show in Figure 2, “Taking regular exercise” and “Staying connect with people at DCC” were the most chosen options (19 each) followed closely by “Keeping in regular contact with family and friends” (18). This is broadly similar to the most popular options in the original survey.

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

While all options received more responses due to the increase in number of Councillors taking the survey, their change in comparison to the previous survey was not uniform. As shown in Figure 2, “Taking regular breaks from work” and “Keeping my mind active from reading and learning” had larger increases in responses, more than doubling their responses, compared to “Maintaining a good routine to work and home” which had a smaller increase.

Furthermore, respondents felt well supported by DCC at this time, with more respondents feeling “Extremely well” or “Somewhat well” supported. As show in Figure 3, the original survey (inner ring) compared to the repeated survey (outer ring) shows no respondent felt “Somewhat not well” or “Extremely not well” supported in April 2021 and more respondents felt supported in some way. 82% of respondents felt supported in April 2021 compared to 71% in December 2020.

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

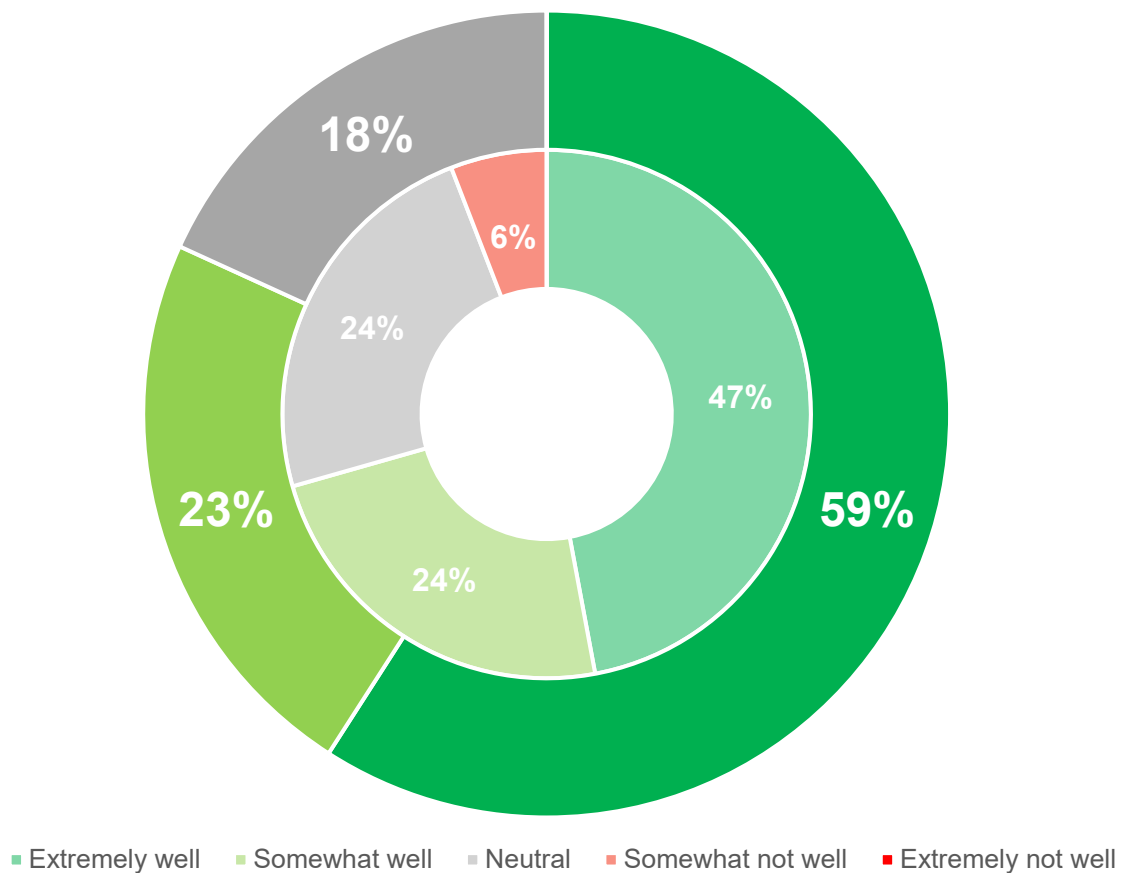


Figure 3: Doughnut chart showing the responses to Question 3: “How well supported by DCC do you feel at this time?” from the original survey (inner ring) and the repeated survey (outer ring).

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

Finally, Question 5 asked respondents in “the spirit of celebrating what has worked well” to share what has helped them during this time. 22 responses were given, with some respondents offering multiple suggestions. A selection of the responses is shown in the graphics below.

Categorised into similar responses, the council’s IT provision including the ability to have remote meetings and the use of MS Teams received the most mentions (8) with respondents highlighting how it had helped them to carry out their role as a councillor. Respondents highlighted the benefits of remote meetings which meant “**less driving**” to meetings, meetings were “**less time consuming**” and meant more time could be spent on other tasks such as helping residents.

In addition, respondents stated communications with DCC Officers has helped them. 5 respondents commented on the ease of being able to contact officers. Respondents stated that “**Council officers have been responsive**”, “**officers are always kind and helpful**” and officers they have spoken to “**deal with my queries quickly and efficiently**”.

WHAT HAS HELPED AT THIS TIME?

“Knowing that colleagues (and, by that I mean staff as well as members (and, cross-party)) are always at hand”

“Virtual meetings, been wonderful. Much less driving, more time to devote to residents and having the facility to set up meetings with residents virtually. Excellent member support and a great IT team”

“The ability to contact someone to advise you who or what department to get help from”

“Teams has been a success”

“Officers are always kind and helpful”

“As I live on my own I am in a very good bubble with a family opposite”

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

4. 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, 2 respondents 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. This is an increase of 1 respondent compared to the previous survey.

In addition, as shown in Figure 2, 1 respondent indicated they are seeking support from a professional organisation to support their overall health and wellbeing. This is an increase of 1 compared to the previous survey.

Finally, 1 respondent to Question 5 indicated they were receiving professional wellbeing support which shows that some Councillors might be struggling and may require extra support to discuss their personal issues and concerns with their role.

5. Can we be supporting Councillors better?

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. There were 21 responses to Question 4, with 1 respondent offering two suggested improvements. The plurality of respondents (11/21) did not offer a suggestion to what the DCC could do to support them better and their responses commented similar statements such as “nothing”, “I have all the support I need”, “I’m fine” and “nothing in particular”.

However, there were still some respondents who did offer some suggested improvements relating to their individual needs and experiences. 3 responses relate to communication with Councillors and how we are currently working as an organisation. 2 respondents asked for all officers to ensure emails are answered more promptly while 1 respondent felt working at home has led to delayed decision making and a “lack of corporate working” which needed addressing.

Finally, as can be seen in Figure 5, respondents offered a range of individual responses to the question such as keeping virtual meetings in some capacity, advice on how to cope with workloads, ensuring there is somewhere where councillors can go to get support. While they are individual responses, there is a common theme that councillors have large workloads and were looking for support to reduce the pressures on themselves.

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

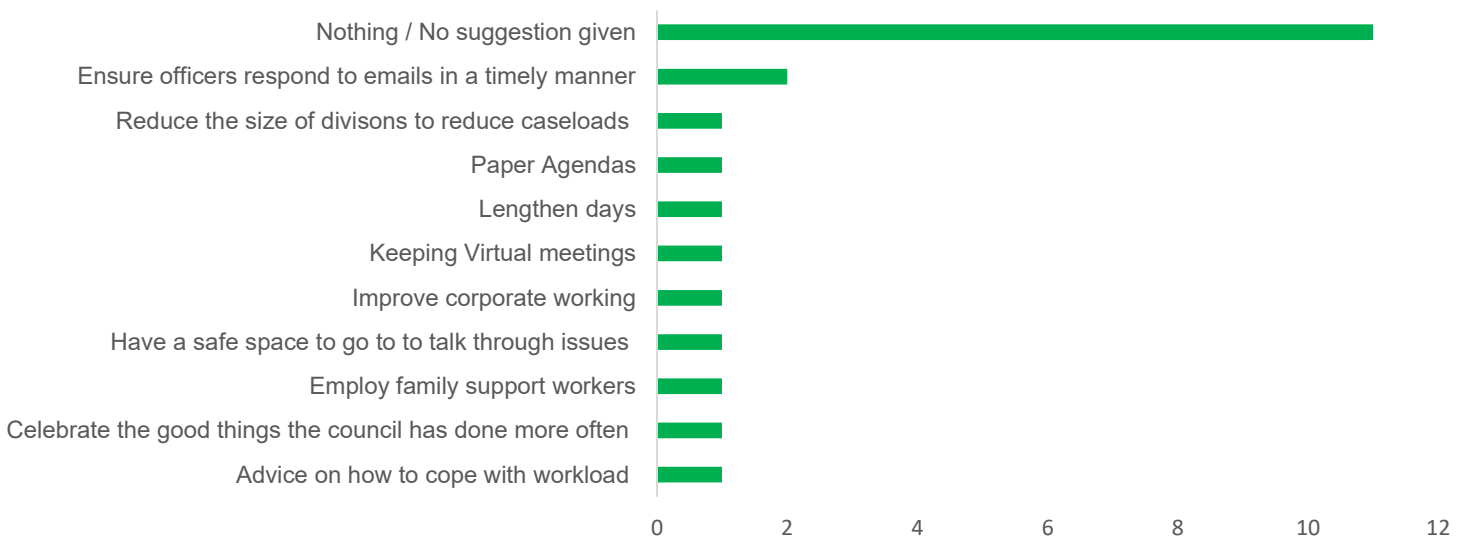


Figure 5: Graph showing the responses and frequency of responses to Question 4 – What one thing could the council do to support you better at this time?

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

6. Induction and support for new Members

Question 6 was the only question asked on the repeated survey that did not appear on the original survey. Question 6 asked in anticipation of the local elections and the expectation that some Councillors would retire or not return: “what we can do to support new Member’s wellbeing as part of the induction programme?”.

Respondents offered a range of suggestions which were built into the induction programme for new Members. Details of these are shown below, grouped into similar suggestions

Suggestions from respondents	How these were built into the Induction programme
<p><u>Information given to Councillors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining their role and responsibilities • Give Councillors the opportunities to attend meetings • Ensure new Councillors are not over-burdened • A directory of who does what at DCC • A website of resources for Councillors on who to contact for different services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Devon Seminar gave an overview of the County and Council. • County Council Meetings Procedures briefing gave an overview of the roles, responsibilities, and framework of how we make decisions. • Induction programme lasting over 6 months to not overburden Members with information immediately after the election. • Chief Officers and Heads of Service asked to create videos of themselves and their teams/services. • Member’s Area on Sharepoint acts as a directory of who’s who and resources for Councillors to access. • All Councillors are invited to all induction sessions (except Committee specific training).
<p>Members Services Team offer -acting as a point of contact in the first instance for any queries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Members Services Officers (as part of wider Democratic Services and Scrutiny Team) acting as initial points of contact
<p>Empowering Members to ask questions – “no question is a stupid question”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny induction session included effective questioning tips and examples to empower Members. • Scrutiny Special Advisors offer Key Lines of Enquiry for Members to take forward.
<p>Member Mentoring/Buddy Scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged within the political groups • Scheme progressing with expressions of interest and matching up of Members.
<p>Fostering relationships with each other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of breakout rooms in induction sessions to help Members introduce each other. • Ensuring breakout rooms included both new and returning Members to foster relationships and share experiences.

Agenda Item 9

Member Development Steering Group
Thursday 16th September 2021

<p><u>Individual support and wellbeing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering support on health and wellbeing • Advice on how to cope with workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing support networks available to Members circulated and signposted to Members • Bulletin sent to Members detailing the support available to them.
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7. Action Points from the Member Wellbeing Survey

Suggestion	Action	Agency
<p>This survey was carried out at the end of the term, and therefore Councillors responding to the survey have now changed. Some respondents are no longer Councillors and some new Councillors have not had the opportunity to inform us on their wellbeing</p>	<p>Repeating the survey in the near future ensures the results are up to date and relevant for our current Councillors.</p>	<p>Member Development Steering Group decision Democratic Services and Scrutiny Team to carry out.</p>
<p>Whilst the majority of Councillors are positive and feel supported, some respondents indicated they may require some extra support.</p>	<p>Identification of and subsequent targeted support for any individual Councillor who may not feel supported or positive in their role.</p>	<p>Member Development Officers (potentially through Personal Development Interviews). Democratic Services and Scrutiny Team (Members Services Officers)</p>

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Organisational Development, Workforce and Digital Transformation:
Councillor Andrew Saywell

Contact for Enquiries:

- Camilla de Bernhardt Lane (01392 383143)
- Charlie Fisher (01392 383691)

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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