MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

7 February 2024

Present:-

Councillors J Bailey, L Hellyer, C Leaver, L Samuel, A Saywell (Chair), D Sellis and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors J Berry, A Connett and M Hartnell

Members attending in accordance with Standing Orders 8 and 25

2   Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6th October 2023 were agreed to as a correct record of the meeting.
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3   Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

4   Member Learning and Development Log

Officers appraised Members of the training and development opportunities since the last meeting and the future training and development opportunities.

The report highlighted the previous masterclasses and all Member briefings that had taken place since the last Steering Group meeting and the upcoming opportunities.

Members comments and discussions relating to the Report included:

- That whilst attendance figures have increased, Members were concerned that less than 25% of Members attend each session.
- If additional analysis could be done to understand whether the same Members attend regularly to support learning around improving access to sessions.
- To ensure sessions were advertised as early as possible, recognising that some sessions are in the annual Calendar already and some Scrutiny masterclasses, standing overview groups and task groups are arranged on an ad-hoc basis.

- In addition, there was also concern about the poor attendance at Corporate Parenting Forum meetings particularly as it was on the same day as full Council.

Action: Officers to send out the established All Member Development Sessions and Masterclass dates from the calendar to Members as diary invites.

Action: Officers to include further analysis of the attendance figures for the next Member Development Steering Group meeting.

5   **Governance Review**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services updated Members on the Council's ongoing Governance Review and the completed strands of work.

The Director updated on these strands including:
- Key decisions and decision making thresholds
- Member Development and Member Engagement Strategy
- Public Participation
- A Local Member Protocol
- Scrutiny

The Director highlighted that the Member Development strand is to be owned by Steering Group and report into the Governance Working Group. Both groups were Chaired by Councillor Andrew Saywell.

The Governance Working Group action tracker and minutes are routinely added to the Members Area on SharePoint and the Director offered to send a monthly email to all Members with the link to the documents for ease of access.

Members welcomed the inclusion of the Local Member Protocol, agreed by the Council at its meeting on 7th December 2023. The Protocol was introduced to ensure Officers inform local Members of significant events and work in their divisions. Members highlighted the instances where this hasn't happened in the past and the Director reported she was working with individual Directorates to embed the Protocol, but asked Members to report any issues whilst the Protocol is being implemented.

Members discussed further IT training around SharePoint and tips/tricks relating to managing outlook and emails, and PowerBi skills. The Director reported she would raise the topics with the Director of Transformation and Business Services outside the meeting and circulate information to Members. Members asked for this to be reviewed as part of the Induction welcome pack received upon election.

6   **Draft 2024 Member Development Strategy**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services re-appraised Members of the Member Development Strategy and the revised 2024 Strategy. Members were also appraised on the previous Member Development Strategy and the feedback from Members from the All Member Day in November 2023.

Officer comments included:
- That a separate Induction Programme would be developed and delivered after the Council's quadrennial elections and the draft Member Development Programme shows examples of what would be 'business as usual' training and development opportunities.
- The document recognises Members have competing priorities in terms of Councillor workload, outside work and other commitments.
- The continued offer of Personal Development Sessions with officers from HR.

Member Comments and discussion areas included:
- Welcoming the updated strategy and ensuring Member individual needs are met.
- That the Strategy should ensure session titles are indicative of the session and easily understood e.g. governance or resilience.
- Sessions should be arranged ensuring they are accessible even if that means repeating sessions, holding them at different times or running them in person or as hybrid meetings.
- It was clarified that members could claim travelling expenses when attending training sessions

Officers agreed to update the Draft Member Development Strategy with the amendments suggested and include it on the agenda for the next meeting of the Steering Group.

7   **Dates of Future Meetings**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Steering Group is Thursday 13th June 2024 at 10:30am.

***NOTES**:*
1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the webcasting site for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

*   DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.58 pm