

Responding to Member asks and concerns from the Member Wellbeing Survey

1. Background

This document is designed to provide a response to single comments written in the member wellbeing survey. The member wellbeing survey ran from 16th December 2021 to 21st January 2022 and the results were reported to the steering group at its meeting on the 15th February 2022.

2. Responses to Member asks and concerns

The following asks/concerns were in response to Question 10 of the Member Wellbeing Survey: “What one thing could the Council do to better support you at this time?”

Ask from Members:	Response or signposting
<p><u>Contacting Officers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who's Who? Guide to Key Officers Ensure officers respond in a timely manner / Ensure staff are in offices 	<p>The Democratic Services team have created a “Who’s who?” guide with photos of key officers, Chief Officers and Heads of Service on the Members' SharePoint site which is line with the Council's public website demonstrating the Leadership Group organisational structure.</p> <p>Members should direct any generic queries to Members Services Officers using the member.services@devon.gov.uk email address. This can include general signposting information. Members can also contact Karen Strahan or Julia Jones if there are issues with response times from other service areas.</p> <p>The ‘How We Work’ programme has reviewed and considered how the organisation and officers will work in the future. This ‘agile’ approach means that work takes place at the most effective locations and times to meet the needs of teams, services, partners and communities, while also respecting individual needs - How we work - tasks and guides (devon.gov.uk).</p>
<p><u>IT Help</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General IT help Linking DCC IT to home or other local authority IT. 	<p>Welcome to my Scomis - This is a self-service portal for Members with any I.T. issues & queries and for requests such as having outlook on your personal device. Members Services Officers can assist with the use of this, but it gives the ability to resolve issues with greater speed.</p> <p>Members can call the dedicated Members / VIP IT phone number – 01392 382060 for initial IT support or contact a Members Services Officer. Colleagues from IT have been invited to Member Briefing/Network Events for Members to raise any queries and are on hand on Full Council day at County Hall.</p> <p>A full range of ICT Information is available on the SharePoint site.</p> <p>It is currently not possible to link DCC IT with other local authority IT. However, there are work arounds such as allowing DCC emails or calendars to be viewed on your smartphone and access to other Office 365 applications (e.g Teams). See Bring Your Own Device Guide – or contact a Members Services Officer.</p>

<p>Hybrid / Virtual Meetings</p>	<p>All meetings which fall under the Local Government Act (1972) and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 must be held in person.</p> <p>The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which permitted virtual meetings ended in May 2021.</p> <p>Whilst we have the technical ability for Members to attend remotely, their attendance and vote cannot be counted for the purposes of the LGA 1972 (the Act making specific reference to being present in person).</p> <p>Officer attendance in the eyes of the law is unclear, so the Council has taken a risk based pragmatic approach to have officer attendance in person when presenting a report which requires a decision.</p> <p>Other meetings which do not fall under the 1972 Act are being held either as a hybrid or remotely which saves time, emissions and travelling to County Hall, which is important in the current climate of budgetary savings.</p> <p>ADSO and LLG continue to lobby Government asking that Local Authorities have flexibility in how they run their meetings in the future. This requires legislative change and there has been no movement to date on the issue.</p>
<p>Refreshments</p>	<p>Tea / Coffee facilities are available for Members in the Members Lounge at County Hall. Fresh milk has also been arranged in recent weeks. Whilst stock levels are checked, if you see we are getting low on anything then please tell us.</p> <p>Norse South West have just re-launched and the new Café in Lucombe house is due to open in the Autumn.</p> <p>Vending options are also being considered at various locations across the campus.</p> <p>Due to budget restraints, working lunches will only be provided in exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p><u>Member Relations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Remoteness' from the Council due to working remotely • Regular 'touch base' with Officers 	<p>Committee meetings have been taking place in person since May 2021 and there is nothing to stop Members meeting informally on these days.</p> <p>Specific networking time has been planned and scheduled on Council days with leadership group as a meet and greet.</p> <p>Officers are generally available in person on Committee meeting days, but of course will always be happy to schedule meetings with Members.</p>
<p>Access to online Assets list</p>	<p>The Council's Assets list (www.devon.gov.uk/communities/assets) can be found on the Communities website. You can search for a particular town/community or postcode to see the local assets.</p>

<p>'Buddy' system</p>	<p>Such systems have been established in the past, with very little take up. And requires interest from Members to volunteer as buddies. However, if this is a specific request, we can revisit to see what can be done.</p>
<p>Consideration of Members' working times</p>	<p>With 60 Members on the Council, all with a range of other responsibilities (working, caring, other Councils), we aim to use a best fit to scheduling.</p> <p>Meetings and events are advertised as early as possible, with the aid of printed paper diaries (if required) and an up to date website showing scheduled committee meetings and relevant deadlines. The calendar is prepared in the Autumn for the forthcoming 18 months (e.g. from January 2023 – May 2024) and is cross checked with other organisations such as Fire and National Parks to avoid clashes wherever possible.</p> <p>We are also aware that some District Councils hold evening meetings as well as Parish Councils taking place, so the Council would not seek to move meetings / events to the evenings as this would disrupt other Councils.</p> <p>Important events such as induction were ran at different times of the day and also recorded, for those that had difficulty attending.</p>
<p>Easier access to Council policies</p>	<p>Council policies are found on the public website (www.devon.gov.uk), either in the "Inside the Council" tab or in the individual service areas. Members can use the search tool or the A-Z to search individual policies or areas of interest. If you are unsure or cannot find what you are looking for, please contact Members Services or the service area directly.</p> <p>Inside Devon – the Council's intranet https://inside.devon.gov.uk/ also provides a wealth of information as well as staff updates, which Members can access.</p> <p>The DCC News Centre (www.devon.gov.uk/news) provides information and updates on what is going on at the Council.</p>
<p>Reducing the number of emails sent to Members</p>	<p>After the Member Development Steering Group Meeting on 15th February 2022, the Head of Scrutiny reminded Democratic Services and Scrutiny Team to reduce generic emails sent to Members, where possible.</p> <p>It is always a difficult balance between providing enough or too much information as people have different preferences.</p>
<p>Running shorter events or providing summaries of events/meetings</p>	<p>Aside from the initial induction events, masterclasses and other training sessions should aim to be around 1 hour.</p> <p>When advertising sessions, officers include some description about what to expect at the session and what it will cover.</p> <p>If Members are re-watching recordings, a helpful tip is to watch recordings back at 1.5X speed to save time.</p>

Time Management Skills	<p>Member can access the DeL Learning Courses on this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- “Managing Yourself and Your Time”- “Time and Workload Management Blended Learning” <p>Members can arrange a Personal Development Interview (PDI) with a learning and development professional to discuss this in further detail as well as a number of other personal development areas.</p>
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Electoral Divisions: All

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

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