

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

03 DECEMBER 2014

Present:

Councillors: Adshead, Douris, G Sutton
and Taylor (Chairman)

Officers: Trina Lawson Corporate Support Team Leader
(Democracy)
Trudi Coston Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 7.25 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Conway, Hearn and Rance.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 were agreed by the members present and then signed by the Chairman.

3. OUTCOME OF PROCUREMENT REVIEW

A presentation was given to the Councillors by Ben Hosier and Andrew Linden on the recent changes to Procurement and Commissioning.

Councillor Taylor asked if the two documents (Commissioning & Procurement Strategy and Commissioning and Procurement Standing Orders) are on the website.

B Hosier confirmed that they are.

Councillor Douris declared an interest as he has a company that provides services to Dacorum Borough Council.

Councillor G Sutton enquired how, if a contract is awarded to a national company and they then sub-contract the works to a local company, how we manage / control that.

B Hosier advised that we can request that the control chain is utilised from the local area. This is something new that we can do through social networking, prior to the procurement process. This then becomes part of the contract management to ensure that the company does as it has said it would.

Councillor G Sutton went on to say that he was aware of a local plumber who had worked for the Council for many years and since the new contract has been in place

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he has not seen any work coming through.

B Hosier advised that he will pick this up with Fiona Williamson as she is the Group Manager for that area and would report back.

Councillor Douris suggested that where this can fall down is that if it is written in the ITT but doesn't make it into the contract. Also if a large national company then says to a smaller local company that they will get the work to do if they can provide certain things that are out of the scope of the smaller company. The larger company can now say that they have tried to offer the work locally.

B Hosier advised that the Osborne contract should have those clauses in there, but that as previously stated he would speak with Fiona Williamson and report back to the group with his findings.

Councillor Douris suggested that on the new approach slide you have the three areas, he went on to say it would be interesting to have a fourth box, or to look at the interaction / governance from members. He went on to ask where is the challenge / audit of these succeeding or failing as Officers can sometimes give suppliers more benefit of the doubt than necessary as happened with the MITIE contract.

B Hosier went on to say that the idea was that the new process almost becomes a full circle and that the contract management becomes part of the pre-procurement process. He went on to say that key contracts are reported on for commissioning and procurement, from a key Performance Indicator level which we then report on. If things aren't working, then who is to say that the contracts officer shouldn't be brought in to drill down the details a bit more. We have support from Steve Baker that this is something that we need to look at. This is a new development for us with Mark Housden and Wimal Alahakan contract monitoring the Northgate and Osborne contracts.

Councillor Taylor advised that within the Audit committee they can call Team Leaders and Group Managers to audit meetings to ask why contracts appear to be failing or are failing. He went on to say this would not just be a "telling off" but an opportunity from a Members point of view to assist. He went onto ask if the new Procurement Strategy cuts through a lot of the red tape.

B Hosier advised that the red tape was still there but that they have tried to simplify it as much as possible. The principles of the rules are the same. He went on to say that it does look simpler on paper but that the proof would be when we come to use them. He advised that the UK is the first country in Europe to adopt these new rules and so they are being transposed into the UK now and should be adopted early next year. He further added that this has allowed us to become more involved in the pre-Procurement process at a local level and demonstrate how we align with the Council's corporate objectives.

Councillor Taylor commented that it did appear simpler from the presentation, with a lot less jargon.

B Hosier advised that the issues with the budget and public spending will not go away quickly but commissioning and procurement can play a part in ensuring over time that it reduces. It is about monitoring the contract and Members challenging what we do and why.

Councillor Adshead asked on the procurement policy landscape what VCSE and
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PBA stood for

B Hosier advised Voluntary Community Sector Enterprise and Professional Buying Association

Councillor Douris asked if they still used DELTA

B Hosier advised that that is the platform currently being used but that that contract runs out next year and has been awarded elsewhere.

Councillor G Sutton requested that it would be nice to have another update in the middle of next year.

4. 2015 MEMBERS INDUCTION AND THE PDP PROCESS

T Coston advised that there has been no further adjustment to the Induction programme since our last meeting, other than the lunch has been extended from 45minutes to an hour as requested. She also advised that all Group Managers and Assistance Directors have also been notified of the 2 induction dates and the need to be available. T Coston also advised that Bill Haylock would not be carrying out the PDP's next year and that we will therefore be looking at an external company coming in to assist. She further advised that we need to get three quotes and would update at the next MDSG in March.

Councillor Douris asked if there was any possibility of a mutual agreement with other authorities that carry out PDP's.

T Coston confirmed that this could certainly be looked at as we already share training.

Councillor Adshead asked what the dates were for the Induction days

T Coston confirmed the dates as being the 21st May and the 6th June 2015

Councillor Adshead suggested that when all the candidates are announced, it would be good to notify them of the dates then.

T Coston confirmed that that was the plan.

Councillor G Sutton advised that on a Saturday in January there is to be a get together of all Conservative candidates, led by Mike Penning and that they could take the information to this meeting.

5. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor Taylor went through the Programme and advised that although some members have suggested that there is too much on the programme prior to the election, that he feels it is important to be up to speed prior to campaigning. He then asked T Coston if there were any changes

T Coston advised that the training scheduled for 8th January – Social Media & Media Training has been requested to be postponed until after the election, and further

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commented that given the low numbers attending training recently, one less may not be a bad thing,

Councillor Douris asked if it may be prudent to separate out the Social Media training from the media training.

T Coston advised that she thought this was part of the plan for the postponing.

Councillor G Sutton referred to the meetings to be scheduled and in particular the Highway training. He went on to say that he has been talking with Alex Cruschiak about this. He went on to say that as this was an emotive subject and controversial, that it would be prudent to be done as soon as possible. He also went on to say that he felt it would be a good idea to be a larger session and that an invitation should be sent to parish and town councillors.

Councillor Douris commented that Paul Newton was a DBC officer and wondered if it would be prudent to get someone from Hertfordshire to carry out the training.

Councillor G Sutton mentioned that Alex Cruschiak had earmarked some people that he hoped to bring along.

Councillor Douris asked if the committee wanted someone to look at the Strategic Development of highways aswell as County are looking at this up to 2031. He finally asked that the training on the 29th January be retitled – ‘Charities – Trustees Roles and Responsibilities’.

6. QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

T Coston advised that the more recent payments have been listed as requested, and that beyond that there was nothing much to report.

Councillor Douris commented that the Link Support Services training had been very good but that he was frustrated that it cost £100 per person and was poorly taken up by Councillors.

T Coston agreed that this was very unfortunate but also very difficult at the present time as we head towards the election.

6. EVALUATION FEEDBACK

T Coston advised that the recent ‘Learn about your Ward’ training was not included in the feedback as the Agendas had been printed prior to the training. She went on to add that the feedback was all very positive with attendance numbers being the only low point. She also added that there had been positive feedback regarding the text reminders.

8. MDSG WORK PROGRAMME

T Coston advised that regarding the Exit Interviews scheduled for the next meeting that we would bring along previous paperwork for Members to look at and amend as necessary.

Chairman

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting finished at 20.48 pm.