

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

2 DECEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillors: G Adshead, Banks, Conway,
P Hearn, Hicks, Howard and
Taylor (Chairman)

Officers: M Anderson Corporate Support Team Leader
(Democracy)
T Coston Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Douris.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Chairman.

3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS - OPTIONS

M Anderson highlighted that at the last meeting the group had discussed the need for PDP's and since then we had obtained quotes from three providers which had been circulated via email. She advised that members would need to make a decision tonight on which provider they would like to use and how they wanted to choose councillors to put forward.

Councillor Taylor ran through each of the options with the committee. He explained that in previous years they had never had 100% of members complete a PDP but he felt it shouldn't be an opt-in process and that all members should do it. He said from a financial point of view option three was the obvious choice and we had used Kathey Bailey before for training sessions so they already knew her.

M Anderson highlighted that option three only included a PDP but not coaching or a review process and at the last meeting the group decided that was something they wanted and felt was important. She also pointed out that option three said they would do 10 appointments a day which she felt was a lot in one day and she was concerned that most members wouldn't be available for daytime sessions.

Councillor Adshead shared the same concerns as M Anderson. He said he didn't feel the previous provider was worthwhile and was concerned that option three would be similar to that previous provider especially if there was no review process. He added that although he agreed with Councillor Taylor that all members should do a PDP

and would benefit from one, they couldn't force members to do it if they didn't wish to participate.

Councillor Hearn said some people are shy, don't express themselves well and have no confidence and that could be why they do not wish to opt-in to the process.

Councillor Banks said members must commit to the process to get value for money. She felt it was better to have less people thoroughly benefit from it than more people do it but not commit or take an interest.

Councillor Howard felt there should definitely be a review process. She asked if the providers had been councillors themselves or if they had local authority experience as she felt that was crucial. M Anderson advised that option one had worked in HR and option two had been a councillor but she wasn't sure about option three.

M Anderson advised that PDP's weren't just focused on the role of being a councillor; it was also on a personal level. She explained that once the PDP's were carried out, herself and T Coston would receive a summary from the provider to help gather information and book the necessary courses that councillor's want/need. She advised that the summaries would be anonymous.

Councillor Adshead noted that there were only three re-elected members on the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee including himself and all the others were new members. He felt it would be helpful to have a session to help the new members understand the role of scrutiny and to answer questions they may have that you wouldn't know as a new councillor.

Councillor Howard agreed with Councillor Adshead and felt she would benefit from some training.

Councillor Hicks suggested a sheet of FAQ's may help.

M Anderson said that in the past Jim Doyle went along to the first scrutiny meeting after the Borough election and gave a 20 minute presentation to help members know what to expect. She said it was something they could look into doing perhaps after Annual Council as the committee membership could change.

M Anderson asked the committee to make a decision on which provider they would like to go ahead with and how they would like to prioritise councillors.

Following a short discussion, members decided they would like an email to be sent to all councillors asking if they would like take part with the PDP's but they would prioritise the new members if they had a lot of interest.

M Anderson advised that if there was a high volume of members wishing to take part then some members would have to wait until the next financial year due to the restricted budget.

It was proposed by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Banks and unanimously agreed that the committee would like to proceed with option one, on the basis that they're available to carry out appointments in the evenings.

4. TRAINING PLEDGE

M Anderson explained that she had come across other authorities that had a Training Pledge in place and she felt it would be a good idea for Dacorum to adopt in place of the Member Charter Accreditation which expired a few years ago. She said the Pledge would need to be signed by the Group Leaders, announced at Full Council and then framed and put on the wall outside the Council Chamber.

Councillor Adshead referred to the third column and sought clarification as to whether it should say '*Members are expected to, or encouraged to.*' M Anderson said she was going to ask members to decide whether it should say expected or encouraged. Following a short discussion on the matter members decided it should say *expected*'.

The committee felt it was a good idea and fully supported the new Training Pledge.

5. MEMBERS TRAINING FEEDBACK

T Coston said she was really pleased with the turnout at James Deane's Budget Setting Process training but she did have to do a lot of chasing to achieve this. She felt it was a really important course with the budget scrutiny meetings approaching so she was pleased to have 25 members attend. She said that the Development Control Committee training was also well attended but unfortunately the numbers dropped again for the Evidence Based Decision Making session. She hoped the attendance levels would improve in the New Year.

6. QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

M Anderson advised that there had been no change to the budget since the last meeting so there was nothing to update members on.

7. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2015/16

T Coston advised that there were no training sessions until 7 January 2016.

Councillor Adshead asked what WRAP stood for. M Anderson said she would have to check and let members know.

Councillor Banks asked if the Mental Health First Aid training had been rescheduled yet. M Anderson advised they were waiting for HR to advise of a suitable date.

T Coston advised that a session had been booked for 'Understanding Risk Register Reports' as requested by the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 20 April 2016 at 6-7pm prior to Full Council.

Actions:

- Member support to advise what WRAP stands for.

8. MDSG WORK PROGRAMME

There were no changes to the work programme.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 March 2016.

The meeting finished at 9.04 pm.