

MINUTES

CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR MEETING

14 NOVEMBER 2016

Present:

Councillors: Anderson (Chairman)
Mrs Bassadone
Chapman
Douris
Fantham
Mahmood
Taylor
C Wyatt-Lowe

Officers: J Doyle
M Anderson
T Angel
K Johnston
K Mogan

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 **APPOINT CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bassadone and agreed that Councillor Anderson be appointed Chairman.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Guest and Imarni.

3 **PERFORMANCE (CARRYING OUT A REVIEW) & TRAINING**

Councillor Anderson explained that he had suggested having this meeting as it had been some time since they had a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman and they used to meet often. He advised that it had also been opened up to regulatory Chairman as the topics being discussed affected all of the committees. He explained that the proposal was to ask all committee members to complete a questionnaire, which could be anonymous if required, and he asked members for their comments and if they supported this proposal.

Councillor Mahmood felt it was a good idea but the contribution from each committee needed to be forthcoming and open to change. He was interested to see the results.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe said that some members on her committee never comment or ask questions and queried if it was a problem at all committees. She also said that she sees the same people at member development sessions and questioned why other members aren't attending.

Councillor Taylor explained he was trying a new tactic on member development and that was to use the strapline 'Whilst not compulsory or mandatory it is essentially necessary.' He highlighted that WRAP was a mandatory course directed by the Home Office and yet many members still didn't attend. Despite running various sessions in-house, he explained that members could also have attended the training elsewhere and that would have still counted towards their attendance but most members still didn't attend.

Councillor Douris arrived at 7.38 pm.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe said training should be compulsory for Chairman/Vice Chairman and even if they're not a newly elected member training should be seen as a refresher. She felt that they couldn't get the best out of a meeting if the Chairman/Vice Chairman isn't properly trained for the role.

Councillor Mahmood said there should be a system of self-governance so that everyone has a record of what they have attended. Councillor Anderson advised that this information could already be found on the DBC website.

Councillor Taylor highlighted that members did achieve their training target on average but it tends to be the same individuals that attend the sessions. He said as Chairman of member development, he feels very passionate about the need for training and he attends every session he possibly can. He said he continues to learn every day and he would like to see more courses be made mandatory as we all need help and guidance at times.

Councillor Anderson asked if the officers could speak to other local authorities and investigate the kind of questions they have asked if they have carried out a similar review.

Councillor Mahmood felt that colleague feedback was a good idea.

Councillor Anderson highlighted the three aims and objectives for this review:

- Improving performance
- Enthuse/encourage members to attend training
- Identify training needs

Councillor Mrs Bassadone felt that the forms should be anonymous in order to get a true reflection of how members are feeling. Councillor Taylor advised that the current feedback forms were anonymous.

Councillor Anderson said he had considered whether the format should be electronic or paper but felt that paper would be more suitable for the questionnaire. M Anderson advised that paper format would be better as she was unsure if you could edit a document on the iPad.

J Doyle referred to the low attendance at training sessions and asked members if there was something we were missing.

Councillor Douris suggested asking members to rate topics in order of preference and add any other suggestions of training they would like to receive. He agreed with the reason for Chairman/Vice-Chairman training; however he highlighted that the decision of appointing those roles was within the political groups.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe explained that when members are first elected they wouldn't necessarily know what they would require training on and suggested it would be helpful to wait until the following year to ask them what they need help with.

Councillor Mahmood felt that some courses repeat themselves. He explained he had been on a story telling course years ago and he felt that was something that would help engage with the public and improve communication skills.

M Anderson said she would liaise with the Hertfordshire Member Development Network Group and collate questions for this group to comment on.

Councillor Douris highlighted that members don't have to pay for courses personally, and perhaps if members were charged for attending it would add more value to the training. J Doyle explained that the training budget was looked after by the Member Development Steering group and although he understood the thought behind the suggestion, it wasn't a decision he could make and it would be for the members to decide.

Outcome:

M Anderson to contact the Herts Member Development Network Group for suggestions towards the questionnaire.

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MOVE TO THE FORUM

Councillor Anderson advised that this item was to inform members of the Forum arrangements and to get a better idea of the layout, the meeting rooms and to see if everything was on track.

J Doyle gave a presentation to the committee on The Forum, which included a detailed slideshow on the building layout and the new technology within the meeting rooms.

He highlighted some key dates for member's diaries:

- 3 January – Move to the Forum begins
- 6 January – Democratic Services move in to The Forum
- 11 January – Full Council Rehearsal
- 14 January – Customer Service Unit move in to The Forum over the weekend
- 16 January – Business will be resumed as normal
- 18 January – First Full Council meeting in the new Council Chamber
- 26 January – Effective Scrutiny Training

5 **ALL OSC WORK PROGRAMMES**

Councillor Anderson ran through each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes and asked members to highlight any amendments or issues. There was nothing substantial to report.

Councillor Anderson said that he felt the SPAE committee contribute in discussion and genuinely scrutinise performance reports more now than in previous years.

6 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

M Anderson highlighted that the budget process training session was on Thursday 17 November but the number of attendee's was still very low. She asked if members could spread the word and encourage others to attend.

The Meeting ended at 8.34 pm