**MINUTES**

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP**

**19 JUNE 2019**

**Present:**

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| **Councillors:** | Barry |
| | Bhinder |
| | Douris |
| | Freedman |
| | Silwal |
| | R Sutton (Chairman) |

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| **Also in attendance:** | Councillor Anderson |

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| **Officers:** | Katie Mogan | Corporate and Democratic Support Lead Officer |
| | Charlie Webber | Corporate and Democratic Support Officer |

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

## 1        ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

KM introduced the Member Development Steering Group and its purpose of enhancing the training of councillors and thus the performance of all councillors. She continued that at the first meeting of a new council term the chairman is usually nominated by the leader of the council. KM said that Councillor Rosie Sutton had been nominated by Councillor Andrew Williams.

Councillor Silwal proposed support for this nomination which was seconded by Councillor Bhinder.

Councillor Rosie Sutton was elected as the Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group.

Councillor Alan Anderson noted that as a Chairman had not been elected prior to the meeting, he could not ask the Chairman if he could attend the meeting to raise a matter. Councillor Anderson asked Councillor R Sutton if he could be present at the meeting. Councillor R Sutton agreed that this was fine.

## 2        MINUTES

Councillor R Sutton asked if there were any amendments to be made to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March.

It was agreed that there was an amendment to be made in the first line of the penultimate paragraph: the third word "gave" was to be deleted and replaced with "asked that" and the seventh word "for" be deleted.

The amendments to be made were agreed.

## 3    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor R Sutton noted that Councillor Douris was going to arrive late.

Councillor Douris arrived at 20:05.

## 4    ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT

KM went through the Annual Training Report and said that any training and suggestions could be added in the future.

Councillor R Sutton asked whether Appeals Committee Training was going to be provided.

KM confirmed that a session would be arranged prior to an Appeals committee meeting.

Councillor Freedman asked whether any of the previous member development opportunities had been oversubscribed.

KM stated that a limit on attendees was not set on member development opportunities.

Councillor Anderson stated that it was the opposite and, in fact, there was a lack of attendees at member development opportunities. He continued that this was concerning considering the cost of external training providers and the lack of attendance at these sessions.

Councillor Bhinder said that it was important to make members aware of the cost of training and the importance of attending sessions.

Councillor Anderson suggested that member development opportunities became an item for discussion at Group Meetings to encourage attendance.

## 5    MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor R Sutton noted the updated Member Development Programme that had been added to the Agenda.

KM stated that 38 members had attended mandatory GDPR sessions and that 13 members had not yet attended a session. She continued that a further GDPR session had been arranged for 2nd July but that some members had already informed member support that they could also not attend this session.

KM noted the importance of members attending sessions. She also noted the high cost of external providers.

Councillor Anderson raised his issue with attending mandatory training and gave the example of GDPR training. He said that he had already attended a GDPR session within the past 18 months and therefore did not agree that he should have to attend a further session.

Councillor Bhinder agreed with Councillor Anderson. Councillor Bhinder continued that he understood the importance of attending regular training sessions where legislation was changing all the time and gave the example of Licensing training. He reiterated Councillor Anderson's view that if legislation had not changed and a member had attended a session within the past 18 months, then he did not agree that they should have to attend a further session.

KM stated that these views would have to be put to Group Leaders to help keep a record of training sessions that members had attended.

Councillor Bhinder noted that the Chairing Skills Training was similar as, generally, legislation did not change.

Councillor Freedman noted that it was up to Group Leaders to make that call and in ensuring compliance from members in attending training.

Councillor Barry stated that she had completed GDPR training with Hertfordshire County Council and that her commitments with them meant that she could often not attend member development sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

KM stated that the timetable was restricted and that member development sessions were planned around committee meetings.

Councillor Barry suggested members providing certificates to prove that they had attended training sessions within the past 18 months.

KM said that she could speak to Mark Brookes about these ideas.

Councillor Anderson suggested that for those members who had not attended mandatory training sessions at all, it would be preferable if they could pick a date suitable for them.

Councillor Freedman added that it may be useful to liaise with officers and Group Leaders to select dates for sessions so that the maximum number of members could attend.

KM stated that this would be reasonably straightforward for internal providers, however the cost of external providers was expensive.

Councillor Freedman noted that the budget was being underspent anyway.

KM stated that the only mandatory training not on the Member Development Programme was safeguarding due to internal staffing and that this training may need to be provided externally and would possibly take place in early 2020. She continued

that invites to member development opportunities had also been extended to Town and Parish councils.

Councillor Bhinder asked if it would be possible to create separate reports of attendance for Borough councillors and Town & Parish councillors.

KM confirmed that this was possible and would be done going forwards.

Councillor Sutton asked whether all members could attend sessions when it said on the Member Development Programme, for example, 'DMC members' when they were not part of this committee, or whether members could only attend sessions when it said 'Open to All Members'.

KM confirmed that members could attend all sessions, whether they were members of the committee or not.

Councillor Freedman suggested that the wording on the programme was changed to say 'Recommended' for relevant committee members alongside 'Open to All Members'.

KM confirmed that these changes could be made.

## 6 QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

KM went through the Quarterly Budget Update and stated that Social Media Training had already been paid for and that it was expensive but had previously received good feedback. She continued that they were also awaiting costing of the lunch order from the Member Induction as it had been put on the wrong budget and was going to be transferred over. KM also stated that they were awaiting payment to the external provider for the Chairing Skills training session.

## 7 EVALUATION FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

KM noted the changes made to the feedback forms so that they now require a score for relevant areas instead of just comments. She continued that this made it easier to identify patterns and trends.

## 8 INDUCTION FEEDBACK

KM stated that only 8 feedback forms for the induction had been returned, despite 46 members attending the induction days. She continued that reminder emails had been sent out, including an email from the Chief Executive, Sally Marshall.

KM referred to comments made in the feedback about the ICT handover. She admitted that the handover had been somewhat chaotic on the Friday induction but that this was changed for the Saturday induction and put into the Council Chamber instead. KM noted that ICT equipment and badges were deliberately given out at the end so that members did not leave and miss the mandatory Code of Conduct presentation.

Councillor Anderson said that the presentations were really good and that the ICT handover was not that chaotic. He continued that it would have been helpful to find out more about a councillors role along with proportionality.

Councillor Freedman noted that it would have been useful to have been given ICT equipment first to use when meeting people in the marketplace for the first time. He continued that it would have been helpful to have a way in which to record names and numbers of officers that he met at the marketplace. Councillor Freedman added that the titles of groups and distinguishing between each of them was difficult. He said that the induction was very useful and that there was a lot to learn. Councillor Freedman said that the presentations were excellent but that it would have been useful to have a way in which to record the information.

Councillor Bhinder agreed with Councillor Freedman and noted that the volume of information could be overwhelming for a new councillor.

## 9        ATTENDANCE TOTALS

KM noted that the previous committee had introduced the recording of attendance totals and added that these figures were also available on the website for each councillor.

## 10        MDSG WORK PROGRAMME

KM stated that the work programme listed the following MDSG meetings and the standard agenda items on them. She continued that suggestions could be made for additions to the agendas.

Councillor Freedman asked if members could be told about training for officers and whether members could also sign up to these sessions.

KM stated that Human Resources will be rolling out a new system where members can sign up to officer training.

Councillor Bhinder raised technological issues with connecting to the WiFi at The Forum.

Councillor Anderson agreed that he had also experience issues and that the ICT team could access members' devices remotely to help resolve any problems.

Councillor Freedman noted that if a members' problem was with Direct Access, that ICT could not connect remotely.

Councillor Douris arrived at 20:05.

KM noted that the member development budget could also be used for councillors if they wanted to attend courses and to contact member support if they found a course they would like to attend.

Councillor Silwal noted that it may be useful to have ICT training.

KM stated that ICT drop-in sessions could be arranged or that they could request attendance from ICT at committee meetings.

Councillor Douris suggested putting in a figure on the Quarterly Budget Update to demonstrate internal officers' overtime or Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) from delivering member development sessions.

Councillor R Sutton asked if any further Licensing training was taking place.

KM confirmed that Nathan March was in the process of booking an external trainer to provide a full-day course and that they were waiting for him to get back to them with confirmation of this.

The Meeting ended at 8.09 pm