

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

27 OCTOBER 2016

Present:

Members: Conway
Douris
P Hearn
Hicks
Howard
Taylor (Chairman)

Officers: M Anderson
T Angel

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

44 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Banks and Douris.

45 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Chairman.

46 **ANNUAL MEMBER TRAINING REPORT 2015/16**

M Anderson explained that we put together an annual report summarising the training and development progress for the previous year. She said it had been another successful year as we had achieved the training target, set as councillors attending 4 sessions each as the overall training total was 4.2. She highlighted that we had held 21 training courses, 2 induction days and organised 18 PDP's to take place. She said that work was ongoing with the Hertfordshire Member Development Network group and it was all running smoothly. Also we had stayed within the £11k training budget.

The Chairman said that he would like the member development emails to have the following wording added "member development training is not compulsory, nor mandatory, but it is essentially necessary" in order to encourage more councillors to attend.

Councillor Howard asked if the training total was an average or for individual attendance. M Anderson confirmed that the total was calculated as an average but we did have a breakdown of each member's attendance.

M Anderson advised that the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny committee report would now include an anonymous summary of how many members had attended the sessions in that quarter. For example, in quarter 2 there were 4 courses, of which 24 members attended none of those during that period of time. She hoped that by highlighting these figures it would encourage members to attend.

The Chairman explained that he had been involved in member development for approximately 8-9 years and it was much more structured now and he felt we should easily be able to achieve the training target individually. He said he tried to attend every session and felt it was essentially necessary for others to attend and continue learning.

M Anderson said they were worried that councillors may feel that they didn't ask for particular training sessions and therefore didn't attend but we can only base the courses on what had been asked for and what is essential. She added that members can go on external courses too so if there is anything that someone particularly wanted or needed to attend they can just let Member Support know and we will book it for them.

Councillor Howard noted that WRAP training was obligatory and yet only 13 members had attended. M Anderson said those figures were highlighted in the Finance OSC quarterly report. The Chairman felt this would cause problems in the long term but all we can do is continue to encourage members to attend training sessions.

Outcome:

The Member Development Steering Group noted the report.

47 QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

M Anderson advised that the total amount spent in the budget so far was £3,245. She said there were a couple more external courses to pay for early next year but there should be approximately £4k remaining so we will easily stay within budget.

The Chairman felt there was a lack in support as the number of members attending courses continue to drop and felt we may need to look at the reasons for members not attending.

Councillor Howard suggested putting together a survey to try to find out why people don't attend.

Councillor P Hearn said she enjoyed the speed dating style of courses that were used for the induction and voluntary sector and felt this would be beneficial to do again in the future.

Councillor Howard said it was embarrassing that more people don't attend the training sessions.

M Anderson highlighted that the last couple of sessions were requested in the PDP's so those should definitely have had more attendees.

48 **PDP FOLLOW UP SESSIONS**

M Anderson advised that the purpose of this item was to get the go ahead from members to liaise with the PDP provider and organise the follow up sessions.

The Chairman asked if the report could be produced in time for the December meeting. M Anderson said that should be fine.

Outcome:

The Member Development Steering Group agreed for the officers to organise the PDP follow up sessions.

49 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

T Angel advised members that there were a few changes to the programme since the agenda was published; the Budget training had been moved from 1st November to 17th November. A session on Homelessness Review has been added on 19th January due to changes in homelessness legislation and was requested by the housing department. A session on Safe and Confident Use of Social Media was requested in the PDP's and has been scheduled for 9th February with David McGrath. A session for Data Protection and Information Security has been requested especially for new members but also as a review for all members. We are awaiting confirmation on the date and we will advise as soon as it is scheduled.

Also the PDP's highlighted a requirement for a session on improved scrutiny; a colleague from Watford Council recommended someone that had carried out a scrutiny review with them so we have contacted him for more details and will confirm a date shortly. She advised she would circulate an up to date version.

The group had a short discussion on their concerns with confidentiality and what is appropriate or inappropriate for members to know. They asked Member Support to liaise with the relevant person to take forward their concerns and schedule in some further training for members and officers.

Councillor Howard gave her apologies for the speed reading session.

Actions:

- T Angel to circulate an up to date version of the member development programme.
- Member Support to investigate the need for further member officer partnership training.

50 **MEMBERS TRAINING FEEDBACK**

T Angel advised there had been 5 sessions since the last meeting and the feedback was mostly positive. She felt disappointed to see comments on the feedback forms

such as the room was too hot/cold and would like to have biscuits, as this has nothing to do with the training session and the forms were summarised and sent on to the trainer so it doesn't look very professional. She asked members to consider this before completing forms in the future.

Councillor Howard suggested that members may make those comments if they struggle to think of other weaknesses. The Chairman said it would be better if they left it blank.

M Anderson queried if members thought it would be worth investigating a way of doing electronic feedback forms. The Chairman felt that members wouldn't complete the forms if they weren't in front of them at the time and the committee agreed.

Councillor Hicks asked for notes from the Damp and Condensation training if there were any.

Actions:

- Member Support to contact Fiona Williamson for training notes for the Damp & Condensation training.

51 **MDSG WORK PROGRAMME**

M Anderson said we would hopefully be able to add the PDP follow up report to the December meeting but we needed to liaise with the provider first to check his availability.

There were no other amendments or additions to the work programme.

M Anderson asked the members to let her or T Angel know of any items they would like to add to the work programme in the future.

52 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 December 2016.

The Meeting ended at 8.30 pm