

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

3 OCTOBER 2018

Councillors: Banks
Douris
Hicks
Howard
Taylor (Chairman)

Officers: Katie Mogan Corporate and Democratic Support Lead
Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018 were agreed by the members present and then signed by the Chairman with the following changes:

- Councillor Douris & Hicks gave their apologies for the last meeting.
- Under item 3, change 'budge' to 'budget'

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Adshead was absent.

Update on actions:

- An organisation chart has been created with contact details for staff down to team leader level. This will be distributed to members in Members News and a hard copy placed in their pigeon holes.
- A biscuit box has now been provided for Member Development sessions.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor Howard advised that the Hemel Hempstead Conservative Association were holding a meeting with Sir Mike Penning MP to discuss Brexit on 11th October and this may reduce attendees at the training session.

K Mogan advised that this had been organised by Strategic Planning with an external trainer.

Councillor Douris said he suspected that a number of councillors would want to

attend both sessions so queried whether the time could be changed to resolve the clash.

K Mogan said that officers were receiving training from the same trainer in the day so said she would ask if the session could be started earlier to accommodate councillors wishing to attend both sessions.

Councillor Douris said that that it would be a shame to lose the session especially as it is not coming out of the Member Development budget.

4 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

Councillor Douris asked if Councillor Banks had already been on the training sessions listed.

Councillor Banks said she attended Women in Local Government last month and scrutinising council performance was being held later this month.

Councillor Douris suggested that any member that attends an external training course could feedback what they learnt to the committee. He asked what the Negotiating and Influencing course was.

Councillor Taylor said it was a member development session.

Councillor Douris queried why it hadn't been paid yet,

K Mogan advised that she was waiting for the invoice from the trainer.

Councillor Douris referred to the high cost of the training sessions provided by David McGrath. They were not cheap and the value of these sessions need to be maximised.

Councillor Taylor said he had composed a letter to send to all councillors to stress the importance of training. What needs to be looked at is how we make sure councillors attend the mandatory training sessions.

Councillor Banks said she felt the letter was nicely worded. Members were happy with the terminology.

Action: K Mogan to check Mark Brookes is happy with the letter and if so, send in an email to all councillors and leave a hard copy in their pigeon holes.

K Mogan said the office keep a record of what councillor attends each training session and there is also a record of training attended on each individual councillor's webpage for the public to see.

Councillor Douris suggested that ward advocacy would be better placed after the election for new members.

K Mogan said that this session had been requested by current councillors but it is something that could be repeated next year.

Councillor Douris asked if it would be possible to send out the cost of the course on the invitations so members are aware.

Councillor Howard said she didn't think that there were any more DBC nominated trustees.

Councillor Taylor said there were still some.

Councillor Howard said this session might also be useful for new councillors after the election.

Councillor Hicks asked if Councillor Taylor would be running the session.

Councillor Taylor said that it was an opportunity to share his knowledge of the subject. All community centres have nominated trustees and there are 12 of them.

5 EVALUATION FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Councillor Banks gave feedback on the Women in Local Government course that she attended last month. She said it was her intention to write a report to share with other councillors and was waiting on the data for Dacorum so she could compare and contrast. Councillor Banks said the course was very interesting with a number of guest speakers from different authorities. The audience was a mixture of both members and officers. One point she said she found most interesting, was the question, why is there a difference between genders? In education, boys and girls have equal opportunities and come out with comparative results but the work place is still lagging behind but in due course there will be a natural rebalance. For example, in the workplace a man would push for promotion but a woman will carry on because she expects to be acknowledged for her work. Women suffer from 'draw bridge' syndrome – as soon as they get promoted they don't network with other women and tend to sit themselves on a pedal stool. Councillor Banks said she felt the course was definitely worth the money.

Members discuss the ratio of men to women amongst councillors. Councillor Banks said councils should be representative of the community they serve.

Councillor Taylor ran through the sessions since the last meeting and the feedback received. He said the Homeless Reduction Act session was very informative. Some of the weaknesses were that the slides weren't provided in advance but said this was done on purpose to keep the attention of attendees and make sure people attend.

Councillor Douris highlighted the feedback about members 'chipping in' with their own personal stories. He suggested that the member development sessions moving forward should make sure questions were left to the end of the presentation. The

committee endorsed this change.

Councillor Taylor said the Highways advice session had a good attendance but the session was crammed into a small room.

K Mogan advised that the Green Flag awards were being held in all three of the main meeting rooms so they could not be used.

Councillor Taylor said the Negotiating and Influencing training was also a good session.

Councillor Howard said the handout provided was helpful as members could make notes during the presentation.

Councillor Douris said the feedback evaluations should list those who attended to see any trends in those attending or not. Only six attendees for the Negotiating & Influencing session is an insult to the external trainer who is paid a fee.

K Mogan suggested that attendance totals of councillors could be included in the agendas going forward.

6 REVISED FORMAT FOR EVALUATION FORMS

K Mogan proposed a new layout for the feedback forms. Currently, some of the feedback coming through isn't appropriate to send back to trainers and a scoring system will allow us to track the success of training sessions.

Councillor Banks said she thought this was a good idea because it would allow consistency in the questions asked and follow trends.

Councillor Taylor echoed comments that some feedback is inappropriate or objective.

Councillor Douris said he thought the new format was very good. It will help to refine whether we want to use a particular trainer. If there is a consistently low score, are they value for money?

Councillor Howard said it would be easier to use if not happy with the session instead of making a comment, it saves any upset or embarrassment.

Councillor Hicks asked if the lines could be double spaced under the 'comments' section.

The committee agreed to change the format of the feedback forms moving forward.

7 INDUCTION 2019

K Mogan said preparations have begun to plan the Induction programme for the new cohort of councillors after the elections in May 2019. She asked the committee for any suggestions on improving what has been done before.

Councillor Taylor mentioned that the coach tour of the borough was important to show new councillors the whole borough.

Councillor Banks said it might be useful to include the LA sites and more of Maylands as so much development is happening up there.

Councillor Taylor said he didn't find having lots of stops helpful. Community associations have never been included and councillors are involved in them so it would be good to include them.

K Mogan said she was happy to meet with officers to discuss an initial draft plan for the coach tour.

Councillor Taylor said the High Sheriff's Tour would be a good example to follow as this shows off the borough well. They normally stop at 2/3 places in the morning, have lunch, 2/3 more places in the afternoon and home about 4pm. It would be useful to be able to download a tour guide on the iPads.

Councillor Hicks said it would be difficult to get everything done in one day.

Councillor Banks suggested splitting the tour into two: commercial and community.

Councillor Douris said he didn't think he'd bene on a tour as he was familiar with the borough so he wasn't sure how successful they were. He suggested doing the tour in a different way and perhaps construct a treasure hunt/quiz that members could complete in their own time.

Councillor Banks said it would be a good exercise but didn't think it would be very useful.

Councillor Douris said it's something different to think about. The committee could brainstorm locations and encourage people to drive into the villages.

K Mogan said she was happy to look at both and bring them to the next meeting.

Action point update

K Mogan circulated a draft organisation plan that was requested by the committee at the last meeting. If members were happy with it, it would be sent out in Members News and a hard copy placed in each councillor's pigeon hole.

Councillor Douris said it would be useful to have the conversion for the extension numbers and email addresses.

K Mogan said she would double check the names of staff on their email addresses and add the Portfolio Holder for each service.

Councillor Douris asked if a list of starters and leavers could be provided in Members News.

K Mogan said it is distributed each month to staff so can easily be added to Members News.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Douris asked to change 'Induction 2019' to 'Induction 2019: intake and refreshers'

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm