

## MINUTES

### MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

13 MARCH 2019

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Banks  
Douris  
Hicks  
Silwal  
Taylor (Chairman)

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

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

#### **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 were agreed by the members present and then signed by the Chairman.

There were no matters arising from the December meeting and no actions needing completion.

Councillor Taylor said that he was going to send round Section 106 and CIL guidance PowerPoint and presentations and that if there was no response he was going to send these to all members. KM said that she will go back and check whether there had been any responses.

#### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

Councillors Adshead and Howard were absent.

#### **3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Councillor Taylor noted that the Member Development meeting on the 28 March was a meeting that was then cancelled. He continued that Katherine Magson from NHS Herts Valley CCG would be giving a presentation on this date. Councillor Taylor noted that next week he would be seeing a presentation from her at the Health in Dacorum meeting and that on the previous Friday there was a presentation at Shendish Manor. He continued that emails should be sent out about the meeting on the 28 March.

Councillor Taylor moved on to the Member Development Dates 2019/20 on Page 7 of the Agenda and KM said that these dates were definitely confirmed. KM continued that CMT had agreed with the proposed training on Page 8 and also wanted to bring in mandatory training. Councillor Taylor stated that it might be more useful to discuss mandatory training further on in the meeting under Item 9: Member Development Cabinet Report, as there was a list of suggested mandatory training under this Item. He continued that the MDSG had brought about mandatory training.

Councillor Douris suggested that on Page 8 under the column 'Which Members?' that events which said 'All Members' should say 'Open to All' instead. Councillor Banks agreed that 'Open to All' would sound better.

Councillor Hicks asked about attendance at the Development Events and that if you had previously attended an event, whether you would be required to attend again. KM and Councillor Taylor confirmed that it was mandatory for all Councillors to attend the Development Events, even if they had attended a similar event previously. Councillor Hicks understood that every new Councillor would have to attend Development Events. KM stated that this coming year, due to elections, all Councillors would be required to attend Development Events. She noted that after attending Development Events this coming year, that Councillors would not necessarily need to go to the same events every single year and would only be required to attend if there had been an update to training.

Councillor Douris stated that attendance at mandatory sessions could not just rely on one session running. KM confirmed that more than one session would run for mandatory Development Events.

Councillor Taylor stated that Member Development Dates for 2018/19 had been completed and this was agreed.

#### **4 QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE**

Councillor Taylor moved onto the Quarterly Budget Update on Page 9. KM stated that no more money had been spent since the last meeting in December. Councillor Taylor confirmed that Councillor Douris did not want mayoral training resulting in an underspend of £4,000. KM agreed that this was correct, unless any further training was booked, but that there probably would not be any more.

#### **5 EVALUATION FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS**

Councillor Taylor noted the broader set of questions for individuals to answer as feedback on training and development. He continued that this gave the opportunity to answer specific questions, although feedback was still bringing up interesting comments despite trying to avoid this. Councillor Taylor asked if there were any further comments. There were none.

#### **6 ATTENDANCE TOTALS**

Councillor Taylor stated that he hoped the next Chairman would continue to push for increased Attendance Totals. KM said that 23 Members have not attended any courses for the past year. Councillor Taylor questioned why Members were not

attending and that it was probably a combination of factors. He continued that it was good that there was a record of attendance. KM noted that Councillors' profiles on the website included their attendance on courses. Councillor Taylor asked if there were any further comments. There were none.

## **7 INDUCTION 2019: INTAKES AND REFRESHERS**

Councillor Taylor drew attention to the New Member Induction Plan on Page 22. Councillor Banks questioned why some services were not providing a stall at the market place. KM responded that the Chief Executive had now requested for all services to attend and that this was now happening. Councillor Banks asked whether the Service market stalls list would be updated. KM confirmed that it would and that the Induction Programme would go out to all Councillors after the election.

## **8 MDSG WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Taylor noted that the Work Programme was not included on the Agenda. KM responded that this will form the Cabinet Report moving forward.

## **9 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - CABINET REPORT**

Councillor Taylor moved onto the Cabinet Report and stated that it had been dealt with by Councillor Collins who had then spoken to him about what they thought. Councillor Taylor ran through the Member Development Programme from Page 19-23 on the Agenda. He drew attention to the list of mandatory training and noted that this was for Cabinet to agree on.

Councillor Banks referred to paragraph 2.1 of the Cabinet Report and voiced that the attendance figures were disappointing. She continued that the proposed consequences for failing to attend mandatory training as detailed in paragraph 2.5 seemed quite thorough and agreed that if Councillors did not consistently complete the bare minimum that was required of them, in attending mandatory training, that a formal reprimand was sound. Councillor Taylor referred to previous mandatory training concerning Prevent and Trafficking and Modern Slavery and stated that this had been obligatory for all councillors and all staff and that some did not attend because they had attended similar training in the past. He also referred to paragraph 2.5 and noted that the proposed consequences provide some policing and added that perhaps Councillors could be removed from their respective committees if they consistently failed to attend mandatory training, or that their voting rights on their committee could be withdrawn as a type of reprimand. Councillor Taylor noted that they had made progress and had come a long way forward.

KM stated that she was working with Mark Brookes and Councillor Collins to decide which training should be mandatory. She added that the Budget setting process training had been brought in earlier. KM continued that training such as Media (and Social Media), Safeguarding and GDPR were seen as important and therefore suggested as mandatory, especially since some of these areas have legal ramifications.

Councillor Douris queried the use of the word 'mandatory' and suggested using the word 'obligatory' instead. He continued that the use of the word 'mandatory' could be used for training that was legal or statutory, such as Prevent but that the word

'obligatory' may be more appropriate for the non-statutory training. Councillor Douris added that he had concerns about what Councillor Taylor had said regarding removing Councillors from their respective committees or withdrawing their voting rights on these committees. He continued that if Councillors had not completed relevant committee training then they would not be on the committee in the first place. Councillor Douris added that it would be difficult to withdraw a Councillors committee voting rights.

Councillor Taylor commented on the wording for 'mandatory' training and stated that Mark Brookes felt that 'mandatory' was a better word for these training sessions.

Councillor Douris reiterated the need for at least two sessions for each of the mandatory training sessions and raised his concerns about the availability of dates and officers providing this amount of training. KM stated that spare dates had been allocated from the timetable, which were dates on which there were no scheduled meetings or sessions. She confirmed that John Worts was happy to deliver two GDPR sessions and that Mark Brookes would be delivering 2 sessions on the Council's Constitution & Code of Conduct.

Councillor Douris queried the use of the Local Government Association as a training provider. KM stated that the LGA provided training at a lower cost to most other providers. Councillor Douris raised that it could be more refreshing to have new people delivering training sessions as he recognised some of the names on the proposed Member Development Programme 2019/20. KM responded that Charlie Webber had researched different providers, what they offer and the cost of training. Councillor Douris enquired about David McGrath as a training provider and noted that mayoral training delivered by him came at a cost of £1,500 and that the cost of his training was expensive.

Councillor Hicks referred to the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) as a potential training provider. Councillor Douris agreed that the HAPTC offered an insight into what Town and Parish Councils could get from their Councillors as well as what Councillors could get out of their Town and Parish Councils. Councillor Taylor commented that he had been on a course about the relationship between District & Borough councils with Town & Parish councils and that there had been an MP talking about it and that it had been informative.

Councillor Taylor commented that he was pleased with the Member Development Update and that it had developed well. Councillor Banks agreed that it shows MDSG's journey well.

KM referred to paragraph 4.2 of the Cabinet Report and raised a mentoring programme and Personal Development Plans (PDPs). Councillor Taylor noted that PDPs used to be used every year and involved every member of staff but said that it needed to be more than a 5 minute process and that it was also expensive if provided externally. KM responded that she had discussed PDPs with Mark Brookes and that they were developing a framework for this to be completed internally. Councillor Douris commented that paragraph 4.2 could be taken out of the Cabinet Report and that PDPs had been brought up at a Portfolio Holder meeting and he did not think that people would attend PDP sessions. Councillor Taylor commented on paragraph 4.2 and the use of the wording 'ward matters' and what this would entail. KM responded that they were looking at a buddy system for new councillors.

Councillor Taylor added that buddying was very different from PDPs. Councillor Silwal commented that he thought that PDPs might not be popular as it could be seen as an additional thing to do in Councillors' voluntary role. Councillor Douris disagreed with Councillor Silwal on the notion that Councillors' roles were voluntary. Councillor Taylor agreed with Councillor Douris and stated that a PDP would lay out goals for Councillors to achieve a successful term as part of their contract as a Councillor. Councillor Silwal added that Councillors should be more interested in issues concerning their ward. Councillor Taylor added that PDPs would only be useful if Councillors bought into the process. Councillor Douris commented that the buddy system was a good idea for new Councillors finding their feet and that when you are first elected it can be daunting. He continued that a PDP had the impression of being more capability-based and was linked to the Councillors Code of Conduct which has an element of expectation. Councillor Taylor stated that paragraph 4.2 should be left as it is but perhaps with the inclusion of a buddying system as an idea that can be added. He continued that perhaps taking the word 'Plan' out of 'Personal Development Plan' could be a potential option. KM responded that she can feed this information back to Mark Brookes to be shared at Cabinet. Councillor Taylor stated that he was happy to agree with all that had been discussed.

Councillor Taylor asked if anyone had any more to add. Councillor Hicks commented that he had found the bus tour quite useful, but that it was no longer being used as part of the Induction. KM responded that a booklet containing information about the wards as well as points of interest in each ward was being produced instead. Councillor Douris queried whether information about social deprivation and social need could be added to the booklet. KM responded that the information in the booklets was based on the 2011 census and questioned how factual and relevant information about social deprivation and social need would be. Councillor Douris agreed that the information would probably be outdated. Councillor Taylor referred to a document titled 'Data-based decision-making' and that this could be useful for the production of the booklets. Councillor Douris added that Herts. Insight may also prove useful.

Councillor Taylor gave his grateful thanks for be extended to all members of the Committee and wished them all well for the future.

Councillor Douris commended Councillor Taylor's skill, verb, passion and humour as Chair of the Committee. Councillor Banks and Councillor Silwal agreed.

The Meeting ended at 8.31 pm