

MINUTES

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

2 MARCH 2016

Present:

Councillors: G Adshead, Conway, Douris,
P Hearn, Hicks, Howard and
Taylor (Chairman)

Officers: M Anderson Corporate Support Team Leader
(Democracy)
T Coston Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Banks.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Chairman.

3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS - UPDATE

M Anderson advised that she was waiting to receive the final report from Phil but she understood he had to report to David McGrath first and then to us so it was likely to be next month. She explained that there were 21 spaces, 13 councillors had face-to-face interviews, 5 had telephone calls and the forms to complete were emailed to them and there are still 3 spaces remaining. She advised that we had already paid for 21 spaces so if there were no more volunteers we would look to get a refund for the 3 remaining spaces. The cost also included a follow up session which would take place later in the year.

Councillor Douris said that he would take one of the remaining spaces if there were no more new members that wanted it or if we couldn't get a refund.

Councillor Taylor explained that he had spoken to the Chief Executive about PDP's and she had suggested that all members should be automatically signed up for these unless they opt-out.

M Anderson raised concern about this approach as it took lots of chasing to get the amount of volunteers that we did and she was worried that there would be lots of members not turning up for their appointments if they weren't committed to doing it. She felt this could be a costly exercise.

Councillor Taylor said he was surprised about the lack of interest but felt we needed to keep encouraging people to take part.

4. MEMBERS TRAINING FEEDBACK

WRAP Training: T Coston highlighted that only 11 members had attended the WRAP training and they had since met with Councillor Taylor and circulated an email to all members to advise them this is a compulsory training session. She advised that she had liaised with Julie Still and they had offered to hold another evening session for members and there would also be some day time sessions arranged for staff which members are invited to attend. She said she would advise members of the dates as soon as possible.

Councillor Taylor was aware that other WRAP courses were being held elsewhere and therefore Members might have already attended one of those. He reiterated that this was a compulsory course and the team therefore needed to ensure all 51 councillors had attended at some point. Member Support would confirm future WRAP sessions with councillors once they were known.

Councillor Douris felt that it would be helpful to members to show the time of the training session within the evaluation feedback for this meeting.

Emergency Planning Training: T Coston explained that this training session is held every 1-2 years to keep members up to date with the Emergency Plan. She said this year it was held to focus mainly on the new members so they're aware of the process, but would also be a refresher for existing members. She advised that although the scores and feedback on the evaluation forms was mostly positive, she was informed that there were some concerns about the training and she asked the Chairman if there was anything he wished to say on the matter.

Councillor Taylor had spoken with the Chief Executive as he felt the first session had been very useful and helped put the procedure into context. However he did not feel the same, following the event in January. He felt, in his opinion, that processes were being suggested which could jeopardise the efficient process. Councillor Taylor discouraged the suggestion of a DBC handbook with contact details.

Councillor Douris felt it would be beneficial to circulate slides prior to a training event. Councillor Taylor preferred not to have slides circulated prior to an event.

Councillor Douris raised concerns with people's skills to give PowerPoint presentations. He felt that recent presentations were too crowded and made slides difficult to read.

He noted that there was a 24 hour helpline for highways disasters which was 0300 1234047.

Actions:

- Member Support to advise of future WRAP training dates.
- Member Support to add the time of the training to the evaluation feedback forms.

5. QUARTERLY BUDGET UPDATE

M Anderson highlighted the cost we had paid for the PDP's and advised it worked out at £198 per councillor which included the initial assessment and a follow up session. If we were to have any refund from the PDP's would then that would affect the

remaining balance. M Anderson said we had managed the budget really well this financial year considering we've had the Induction events and extra training courses.

Councillor Douris asked how much the budget would be for 2016/17. M Anderson said she would have to check and let him know but it would definitely be less than this year as the budget is always increased on the year of a Borough Election.

Councillor Douris said it is always good to spend the budget otherwise it is likely to be cut.

Councillor Hicks suggested some of the budget for 16/17 would be spent on training courses requested in PDP's. M Anderson confirmed that would be the case. She said they would be bringing the training programme for 16/17 to the next meeting.

M Anderson advised that they could look at the budget half way through the next financial year and if it's affordable they could think about offering PDP's to other members that may want to complete one.

Councillor Howard asked how long it had been since the last PDP process. Councillor Taylor advised it had been approximately two years. He said doing it every year wouldn't be as effective as you need time to achieve your aims and training needs.

Actions:

Member Support to advise of the training budget for 2016/17.

6. MDSG WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Taylor asked for suggestions on items to be added to the work programme.

M Anderson said she would like to add 'PDP Outcome Report' to the June meeting.

Councillor Douris suggested a training session for new ways of working in preparation for the move to The Forum next year. M Anderson said this was definitely something they would like to see carried out and there would be lots of changes to equipment and the set-up of council meetings, etc.

Councillor Adshead seconded Councillor Douris' suggestion and felt there should be several sessions to ensure all members could attend. He queried what would happen with the courses that only a couple of people had requested in their PDP's. M Anderson said that the subjects requested the most would be first priority and then they would look at finding courses elsewhere for those one or two people that wanted to attend. She said they had arranged briefings with Assistant Directors before and one-to-ones if members had particular interests in their service so that is something that can be looked in to again.

Councillor Douris asked if we liaised with other authorities with regards to non Dacorum specific courses. M Anderson advised that they were part of the Hertfordshire Member Development Network and share training programmes at the meetings. She explained that we also email each other on an ad-hoc basis with any spare training spaces at a cost of £50 per person. She said she wasn't able to attend the last meeting in January but hope to attend the next one. T Coston advised that 3 councillors had recently attended a training session in Welwyn/Hatfield so the process worked well.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 June 2016. The venue is likely to change to the Dacorum room for this meeting due to the EU Referendum.

The meeting finished at 8.15 pm.