

MEETING	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP
DATE	1 DECEMBER 2011
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS GUNNELL (CHAIR), BARNES, WILLIAMS, RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR) AND WISEMAN

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

20. REVIEW OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Members received a report that reviewed the Member Training and Development Policy. The report also suggested revisions which Members were requested to consider as part of their annual review of the policy.

Members agreed that the policy should be updated to reflect the new Council Plan and to amend references to the Executive to read "Cabinet". It was noted that the policy may need further revisions once the future of the Standards Committee was known and in the light of a review of the Scheme of Allowances to Members that would be carried out by an Independent Remuneration Panel in January 2012.

Discussion took place regarding attendance at external conferences. Although the agreed protocol had been put in place, there were a number of ongoing issues, as detailed in paragraph 13 of the report. One suggestion put forward was to consider providing each Group with a sum to spend on external conferences from within the overall Member Development Budget. It was agreed that further consideration needed to be given to this matter.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the suggested amendments detailed in paragraphs 7 and 17 of the report be approved¹.
 - (ii) That the Chair, Vice-Chair and Cllr Wiseman meet to give further consideration to the issues raised in respect of external conferences and report back to a future meeting².

REASON: To enable the policy to remain relevant and flexible enough to serve the best interests of providing well-trained elected Members.

Action Required

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| 1. Update Policy | DS |
| 2. Arrange informal meeting | TW |

21. BUDGET MONITOR REPORT

Members received a report that detailed the current level of spend against the Member Training Budget for 2011/12. It was noted that the expenditure included the costs for the extensive induction programme that had been provided for newly elected Members. Members were pleased to note that the provision of Member training and development was within budget.

RESOLVED: That it be noted that the budgetary position is on target to be within budget at the end of the financial year.

REASON: To enable the budget to be appropriately monitored during the year.

22. EVALUATION REPORT ON CORE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report that informed Members of:

- The take up at events offered to date
- A summary of the feedback received
- Analysis of the take-up
- Next steps in the core programme

Members were pleased to note the many positive comments about the training opportunities that had been provided.

The following suggestions were put forward in respect of planning for future training sessions:

- Members supported the suggestion detailed in paragraph 21 of the report, that a set of protocols be drawn up for those delivering training to Councillors. This would provide clear guidance as to what was expected and would cover issues such as the format of handouts and presentations to ensure that the training was fully accessible. Members requested that the Staff Equalities Working Group be consulted on the draft protocol¹.
- Concerns were expressed that a number of Members booked to attend training sessions but did not do so. This caused particular problem for trainers in terms of planning activities, workshops and resources. It also meant that some sessions took place although there were a very low number of attendees and were not viable. It was important that Members submitted their apologies if they were unable to attend. Members of the committee agreed that, if officers notified them of the Members concerned, they would raise this issue with them.
- It was agreed that, to ensure the viability of training sessions, a minimum number of attendees should be set and the session should be cancelled if this figure had not been reached. The committee agreed that if, 48 hours prior to a training event, fewer than five Members had registered to attend the session should be cancelled. It was noted that the minimum number may have to be lower for some training sessions, including those that were statutory.
- Mindful of some Members' work commitments, it was important that Members were aware of other training opportunities that were available, including on-line training.

- It would be useful if Members were made aware of the target audience for some training sessions, for example whether they would be useful to new Members or whether they were targeted at those with more experience. It was, however, noted that some of the training sessions also served as a useful refresher for longer-serving Members.
- Members considered the revised evaluation form and supported its introduction. Officers confirmed that trainers were made aware of the feedback that had been received on sessions that they had delivered. The comments on the evaluation forms were also used to inform future training events.

Information was tabled on a leadership and management qualification for councillors which was accredited by the Institute for Leadership & Management. The Authority had been invited to nominate one councillor to take part. Officers sought Members' views as to how the place should be allocated. Members agreed that initially an email should be sent to all councillors to seek expressions of interest².

- RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That Members' comments, as detailed above, be taken into account when planning future training programmes.

REASON: In order to comply with the monitoring arrangements set out in the Steering Group's Terms of Reference, as approved by Council.

Action Required

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| 1. Prepare and consult on protocols | TW |
| 2. Seek nominations via email | TW |

23. WORK PLAN

Consideration was given to the Steering Group's Annual Work Plan. The following amendments were agreed:

- Include an update on conferences (March meeting)
- Include an item on the Intranet and Zone 47 (January meeting)
- Consideration of remit of the Steering Group (March meeting)

RESOLVED: That the work plan be approved.

REASON: In order to provide the Steering Group with a work programme for future meetings.

Councillor Gunnell, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.35 pm].