

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

Present:-

Cllr. Adrian Clifford (Chairman)

Cllr. Royston Bayliss
Cllr. Nick Brown

Cllr. Luke Cousin
Cllr. Bob Waterton

Cllr. Jane Wolfe

Officers present:-

Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

Apologies:-

Cllr. Matt Tomeo and Cllr. Susan Findlay

1. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2023, as circulated, were approved as a correct record.

2. MEMBERS IT UPDATE

The Chairman, Cllr. Adrian Clifford provided a brief introduction to explain why the Members IT update, which was requested at the previous meeting, had been removed from the agenda for this meeting. Members had considered an IT report at Full Council on 25 October, therefore the update was no longer required at this meeting. Members discussed whether, following the update they would prefer Officers and the Portfolio Holder at the next meeting on 5 December 2023.

It was agreed that the Members IT Update be kept as a standing item that could be removed should there be nothing further to report at the next meeting.

3. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023 - 2027**

The Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer (SDSSO) thanked those Members of the working group that helped shape and amend the new Member Development Strategy for the period 2023-2027 and the Councillor Development Review (CDR). The SDSSO asked that Members from all groups provide some quotes and case studies for inclusion in the Strategy, to demonstrate the importance and value of Member Development. This feedback could include examples of training/induction sessions that were useful, examples of support provided by officers, and advice for new Councillors.

Members discussed the Councillor Development Review and the merits of providing a baseline of skills, knowledge and abilities for Councillors. The SDSSO assured Members that any confidential information given as part of the CDR would be treated in the appropriate manner.

The SDSSO informed Members that the Strategy and CDR would be presented to Full Council on Tuesday 28 November 2023.

DECISION

That the Member Development Strategy 2023-2027 be endorsed and recommended to Council on 28 November 2023.

Reason:

It is important that the Council has a structured Member Development Strategy that strengthens the knowledge and skills that Members need to fulfil their demanding roles; help contribute to the delivery of the Council's priorities and respond to the changing needs of the District.

4. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND ILEARN**

The Democracy Support Officer (DSO) presented the Member Development Programme and provided an update on the feedback received at the previous meeting.

Key updates included:

Hybrid sessions

Taking on the feedback of the previous session that it would be beneficial to have more training sessions held hybrid, the DSO explained that Democratic Services were working with officers to determine where practically they can change their session to be held in a hybrid format instead. Cllr. Bob Waterton informed Members of audio and visual difficulties experienced with the Meeting Owl during the Climate Change Masterclass and this was noted by the DSO.

Updates to the Induction Programme

The DSO explained that greater detail was added to the Induction Programme to make key information clearer, with hybrid sessions, cancelled or rescheduled sessions and new sessions each highlighted a different colour. Reasons for cancelled sessions were also added to the programme.

iLearn Update

The DSO reminded Members that 22 modules are available to complete on iLearn and that two of these modules are mandatory:

1. Safeguarding (Bronze Level) Children, Young People & Adults.
2. GDPR.

Members discussed the importance of completing the mandatory modules and agreed to encourage their group members to complete these modules as soon as possible.

DECISION

That the latest update to the Member Induction Programme be approved.

Reason:

To provide Councillors with the key skills, tools, knowledge and confidence to enable them to successfully navigate their roles and effectively discharge their council responsibilities.

5. EVALUATION OF RECENT COURSES

The DSO updated Members on the evaluation feedback from recent courses, which was summarised up to the Climate Change Masterclass that took place on Thursday 12 October 2023. An update was provided on the Value for Money (VfM) and Return on Investment for each session. The DSO explained that the Impact factor was still yet to be measured for all sessions, hence the 'Rating to Date' provided was not a finalised rating. The DSO assured Members that the Impact measure would be available at the next meeting, allowing the finalised VfM rating to be calculated.

The DSO discussed various methods for collating Member feedback to training sessions to ensure the highest level of responses. Taking on the suggestions from the previous meeting, the DSO outlined the pros and cons of using Mentimeter to collate feedback. It was concluded that the disadvantages of using Mentimeter outweighed the advantages, most notably that voting IDs cannot be set, preventing follow up feedback from being taken. Therefore, the DSO suggested that Microsoft Forms continue to be used for the pre session comment forms and that the Initial Evaluation Surveys be handed out as paper copies for sessions taking place in the BDC offices (and be sent via Microsoft forms to virtual attendees).

6. MEMBER SHAREPOINT SITE

Members received a demonstration of the Elected Members SharePoint Site and considered further areas of development for the site.

These included:

- Setting forms to read-only.
- Adding an iLearn tile for easier access to e-learning resources.
- Adding an explanation/guide for different Council functions and which organisation is responsible for them (e.g. County, District or Parish).
- Adding Member Training sessions to the calendar on the Council website.
- Adding a 30 minute reminder notification to meeting invitations on Outlook.
- Removing the 'MOVED' marker next to meetings that have been moved to a new date and instead adding a brief explanation, e.g. "the meeting that was previously taking place on 'x date' is now taking place on 'y date'."
- Resizing of tiles on the Members SharePoint homepage. For example, the larger 'Councillors' tile could be replaced with the 'Toolkit' tile to give Members faster access to the Member Toolkit and Contacts Directory. The 'Useful Links' tile could also be made more prominent.
- Adding tiles for the Council's social media links.

The DSO explained that a series of drop in sessions were being planned for Members in need of IT assistance, e.g. navigating the Members SharePoint site or accessing agendas through the Mod.Gov app. Further information and calendar invitations would be communicated to Members once the dates were finalised.

7. NEW MEMBER'S 6 AND 12 MONTH CATCH-UPS

The SDSSO updated Members on the 6 and 12 Month Catch-Ups which were set to take place on:

- Tuesday 14 November 2023 (6 Month Catch-Up)
- Tuesday 14 May 2024 (12 Month Catch-Up)

Members discussed useful lines of questioning for the catch-up meetings and suggested several discussion prompts to help focus the first meeting:

- An introduction from the Member Development Steering Group Chairman, Cllr. Adrian Clifford.
- What is working well and what have Members enjoyed about their new role?
- What have been the challenges and what could be better?
- Feedback on the Induction Programme, e.g. how has Members learning been facilitated and are there any gaps in learning?
- A recap of the experience of having a buddy, e.g. have Members had contact from their buddies and has it been helpful to have a buddy?

8. BUDGET UPDATE

The SDSSO updated Members on the training budget. The SDSSO advised Members of the budget's increase by £1,000, which would be used to provide a suite of training to fill the urgent training needs of Planning Committee Members. The SDSSO informed Members that an external facilitator, the Planning Advisory Service, was contacted regarding the Committee's training needs.

9. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- Members IT Update
- Evaluation of Recent Courses
- Feedback from the New Member's 6 Month Catch-up
- Progress update on the Councillor Development Reviews (CDR's)
- SharePoint update

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Tuesday 5th December 2023.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.20 P.M.