

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP
Friday, 13 September 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Steering Group held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 13 September 2013 at
1.45 pm

Present

Members:

George Gillon (Chief Commoner) (Chairman)
Deputy John Bennett
Marianne Fredericks
Ann Holmes
Wendy Hyde
Alastair Moss

Officers:

Lorraine Brook	- Committee and Member Services Manager
Gemma Stokley	- Committee and Member Services Officer
Neil Hocking	- IS Services

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Ken Ayers, Mark Boleat and Henrika Priest.

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 May 2013 were considered and approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Three City Schools Joint Training Session (page 2) – A Member highlighted that the way in which training was delivered to School Governors may change as the City's Education Strategy evolves.

Meeting Dates (page 2) – The Committee and Member Services Officer reported that the Group were next set to meet in early December 2013. Following this, three further suggested 2014 meeting dates would be circulated to all for consultation.

Membership Matters (page 2) – The Chairman reported that Mr Boleat had now indicated that he would like to step down from this Group and that this would therefore create a vacancy. He encouraged Members to contact him with any suggestions as to who might make a valuable contribution to the Group going forward, particularly from amongst some of the organisation's newly elected Members.

Deputy Bennett suggested that his new Ward Member, Chris Hayward would be an asset to the Group given that he had been a Councillor in Hertfordshire for many years now. He reported that he had already held discussions with Mr Hayward around sharing examples and best practice from Hertfordshire in terms of Member Development programmes.

RESOLVED – That the Chairman invite Mr Hayward to join the Group.

Ward Deputies (page 3) – In response to a question, the Chief Commoner reported that the issue of providing Ward Deputies with information around their expected duties and responsibilities had been discussed by both the Policy and Resources and the Members' Privileges Sub Committee. The Committee and Member Services Manager reported that Members were seeking more clarity around expectations and defining the role of Deputy. The Members' Privileges Sub Committee were now looking to produce a Protocol for Ward Deputies.

Members recognised that this issue had become increasingly important following the appointment of newly elected Common Councilmen as Ward Deputies in both 2009 and 2013 and the election of new Aldermen.

Members' Photobook (page 6) – The Chairman reported that this document had now been revised and re-circulated and had been well received. The Committee and Member Services Manager highlighted that the document was now also available electronically.

Members commented that it would be useful to encourage some Members to update their photographs in the future in order to make them more readily recognisable, particularly for new Members and Officers.

3. **RECENT EVENTS**

a) **Briefing on the Financial Statements – Wednesday 17th, Thursday 18th & Tuesday 23rd July 2013 (for Members of Audit & Risk Management and Finance Committees)**

b) **Operational Tour of the Chamberlain's Department for new Members of the Finance Committee – Monday, 29th July 2013**

The Committee and Member Services Officer reported that both of these recent events had been well attended and very well received by Members of the Audit & Risk and Finance Committees. She highlighted that, with Members frequently signposting 'The City's Finances' as an area where they would appreciate additional information this had been seen as a positive initiative.

c) **Navigating the City's Webpages 'Drop In' Sessions – Tuesday, 3rd September 2013 & Thursday 12th September 2013**

The Committee and Member Services Officer reported that Officers had taken on board comments from this Group and were now looking to hold these drop in sessions in the Members' Room on Court of Common Council meeting dates. The IS Services Team reported that the changes

had been well received and the number of Members approaching them with IS related queries had increased. Members were informed that, where these queries highlighted a need for further training, Members were invited to attend a 1:1 session with one of the IS Services Team.

4. **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

a) **Staff Appeal Hearing Training (for Establishment Committee members) – Thursday, 26th September 2013**

b) **‘Safeguarding’ Briefing (for Governors of the three City School Boards and the GSMD) – Thursday, 24th October 2013**

A Member stated that she would be keen to see a session examining the role of a Governor in the future. The Committee and Member Services Manager stated that the Assistant Town Clerk was also keen to hold sessions looking at the skills required to be an effective Governor as part of the City’s emerging Education Strategy.

c) **Navigating the City’s Webpages ‘Drop In’ Sessions – Tuesday 17th September & Thursday, 26th September 2013**

d) **Licensing Training (for Licensing Committee members) – Monday, 7th October 2013**

A Member, also the current Chairman of the Licensing Committee, reported that Simon Walsh would be delivering this session.

A Member suggested that it would be hugely beneficial to open up certain Committee specific training sessions to all Members particularly Licensing and Planning sessions to those who were Members of residential Wards. She highlighted that Planning and Licensing issues formed the basis of the vast majority of all correspondence received from residents. Whilst the Chairman of the Licensing Committee agreed with this point of view, she clarified that this particular session was aimed specifically at those who would serve on Licensing Hearing Panels. She suggested that a more general overview session delivered by one of the Licensing Managers would be more beneficial if offered to all Members.

The Committee and Member Services Manager reported that Committee specific briefings would be ‘opened up’ to all Members as part of longer term learning and development plans. The Group agreed that this would be of huge benefit to all Members.

e) **Planning Processes at the Corporation (for Planning & Transportation Committee members) – Tuesday, 5th November 2013**

In response to questions, the Committee and Member Services Manager stated that she would be happy to make contact with Officers in both the Planning and Licensing Department requesting that they schedule Member briefing sessions going forward to provide all with a broad overview of their respective areas.

f) Vision of Growth and Change in the Local Plan (for Planning & Transportation Committee members) – Tuesday, 20th May 2014

The Committee and Member Services Manager reported that Officers were keen to provide this Group with a wider overview of what was currently on offer to Members outside of any formal Member Development Programme, hence the reference to a number of Committee specific briefings.

5. REVIEW OF 'ALL MEMBER' BRIEFING SESSIONS

The Group received a report of the Town Clerk reviewing the delivery and effectiveness of the recent 'All Member' Briefing Sessions that took place in July 2013. The report set out what was offered to Members, summarised some of the feedback received and asked the Group to consider any possible future improvements or issues that should be addressed through the longer term Member Development Programme.

The Chairman began by underlining that he felt that what had been on offer to Members had been 'a step in the right direction'. Members were keen that Officers were not disappointed by the number of attendees at the sessions.

Members commented that it would be worth considering the time of year at which learning and development activities were offered. It was suggested that Members were more likely to attend sessions in January for example as there tended to be less demands on Members' time during this period.

A Member commented that the New Member Induction programme had been extremely well organised and delivered and that the repeat, 'All Member' sessions were also very useful. She commented that the morning sessions (between 8.00 - 9.30am) tended to be better attended. The Chairman added that the Chairman of Policy and Resources had also had great success with his recent 'breakfast briefings'.

A Member stated that he had found all of the sessions he had attended extremely useful and that they had significantly increased his understanding in various areas. He was pleased to see that the momentum set by the new Member Induction Programme had been kept with an All Member Briefing Programme scheduled soon after in July.

A Member suggested that she felt that shorter, 'bite sized' sessions would be preferable going forward and that sessions should be offered as 'drop in sessions' as opposed to formal, RSVP events.

It was also suggested that a briefing 'theme' could be picked for each month.

6. FUTURE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

The Group considered a report of the Town Clerk seeking Members' views in respect of the creation of a Member Development Strategy for the forthcoming period 2014-2017, which would set out the support available to Members in respect of learning and development, the role of the Member Development

Steering Group and the proposed delivery of learning and development activities on a short and longer term basis.

The Committee and Member Services Manager stated that, whilst the production and delivery of a longer term Member Development Programme and Strategy would be challenging in terms of resources, it was hoped that a forthcoming round of recruitment would provide additional staff to support this area of work.

She went on to stress that it would be important to have Member 'buy in' for any Strategy and Programme going forward. The Group were informed that the Strategy would clearly set out and inform Members of what was on offer to them and how this would be delivered. The Committee and Member Services Manager stated that there was now a real momentum behind Member Development and she was keen to maintain this.

In response to a question, the Committee and Member Services Manager stated that, whilst it was not compulsory to have a Member Development Strategy or Programme in place, it was certainly considered best practice to commit to supporting elected Members. She added that, whilst some Local Authorities made certain training mandatory for elected Members, this was not the case at the City of London.

A Member suggested that online training would be a good area to try and develop further with mechanisms for testing the knowledge of Members at the end of each module. He added that this was something that existed elsewhere and had been a success as it enabled Members to access learning and development opportunities at their leisure. It was also suggested that individual training logs could be kept for each Member going forward.

The Committee and Member Services Manager stated that the Committee and Member Services Team had already held initial discussions with IS and Corporate HR with regard to further developing Members' online training modules. The Group were informed that several modules were already available online although the relevance of some of these for elected Members was questionable. With regard to individual training logs, the Committee and Member Services Manager reported that these had previously existed although the value of maintaining these had been questioned. The Group were informed that Officers had kept a record of attendance for all of the recent 'All Member' and new Member sessions and that ongoing monitoring and evaluation would be important in the future.

A Member stated that they were pleased to see that Officers would be asking Members about their preferences with regard to methods of delivery for future sessions. She went on to question if there were any Officer training sessions that Members could perhaps 'tap in to' in the future. The Committee and Member Services Manager reported that there were some e-learning modules that were available to both Officers and Members and that the Committee and Member Services Team had discussed extending this offering with colleagues in Corporate HR and IS. In terms of a future, e-learning programme, Members

were informed that there were associated cost implications and that it was something that the Committee and Member Services Team would not be able to do in isolation as this would require specific technical expertise. In respect of joint Officer/Member training sessions (via the Corporate HR Learning and Development Programme), the Committee and Member Services Manager concluded by stating that, in general, Officer and Member training was not 'shared' due to the Member/Officer dynamic and differing Learning and Development requirements.

The Committee and Member Services Manager went on to report that cross-borough training opportunities might be beneficial and could be explored further but that this would depend on their relevance to the City Corporation.

The Group were informed that a budget of approximately £20,000 per annum existed for Member development and that this could also be utilised to fund various external training sessions as had been done, and well received, in previous years, such as RADA Chairmanship Skills training.

A Member suggested that changing legislation could be a helpful focus of future briefing sessions.

The Group concluded that they were supportive of the newly suggested approach and were keen to see a more forward looking programme of Learning and Development activities commence in early 2014. It was suggested that a programme be fixed for February – April 2014 based on the responses received from Members on the recently circulated questionnaire.

It was suggested that any future Member Development Strategy should also be brought to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee as this was potentially a very influential document. Members were keen to see a clear 'brand' developed for Member Development work going forward. It was also suggested that some thought should be given to how best all of the session information could be 'logged' and distributed more widely to all Members.

7. CONSIDERATION OF MEMBERS' IT NEEDS

IS Services informed the Group that, with effect from 1st September a VIP Support Team had been created to assist Members with any IS related queries.. The Group were informed that this team consisted of Ellen Murphy, David Clelland and Neil Hocking.

Neil Hocking reported that the VIP Team were now keen to increase their visibility amongst Members and to open up a dialogue with regards to what more could be provided going forwards. He commented that a new IS Strategy was now also in place with an increased focus on IS training.

The Group were also informed that the IS Team were carrying out some additional work around 'remote working' and that a new 'Wi-Fi' system would soon be in place at Guildhall.

The Chairman commented that he hoped that the new Chairman's Room IS Facilities would be well received.

The Committee and Member Services Manager reported that the IS Sub Committee had recently discussed ownership of IS training issues and it was suggested that ownership of all IS training related issues should be overseen by this Group as the role of the IS Sub Committee was to have a more strategic overview of the City's IS provision.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

London Member Development Network

In response to a question, the Committee and Member Services Manager reported that she frequently attended the London-wide Member Development Network meetings, examining and sharing best practice in the field elsewhere.

She highlighted that Members of this Group were also welcome to attend such meetings and that the next meeting was expected to take place later this month, details of which would be confirmed in due course.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

Chairman

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