

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING
GROUP HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON
16TH JANUARY, 2015**

PRESENT: County Councillor Sandra C. Davies [Chair]
County Councillors P.J. Ashton, L.V. Corfield, D.O. Evans, M.J.Jones and
D.H. Williams

Officers in Attendance: Carol Johnson (Democratic Services Officer) and
Wyn Richards (Head of Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Stephen Boyd (Cabinet Manager) and Shane Thomas (Member Support Services Manager).

2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting held on 1st December, 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

3. MANDATORY DEVELOPMENT AND NON-MANDATORY DEVELOPMENT

The Working Group considered the mandatory and non-mandatory development sessions and how non-attendance at these could be addressed [copy filed with the notes].

The following was discussed:

- If sanctions were considered the Council would need to agree to delegate responsibility for these to the Standards Committee. However, it was noted that the Head of Democratic Services would discuss with the Solicitor to the Council what sanctions could be considered.
- Non-attendance at mandatory development – the development should be provided on a second occasion and where a Member failed to attend they should be called before the Standards Committee to explain their reason for non-attendance.
- Attendance details at development sessions should be published at Council meetings on a six monthly basis. It was thought that peer pressure may increase attendance. The Working Group also felt that the attendance of Members at meetings should also be published on a regular basis.
- Where attendance at non-mandatory development sessions was below 80%, Group Leaders should be asked to discuss low attendance with their respective Member.
- On appointment to the Council Members sign an Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct forms. The Working Group questioned whether Members should be required to sign a commitment to attend development sessions.

The Working Group noted that the Modern.gov meeting and agenda package would enable attendance at meetings and working groups etc. to be recorded and published on the Council website. A business plan for the purchase of this software was being developed.

The Working Group agreed the mandatory and non-mandatory development sessions and that the Adult and Child Protection session should be included in the mandatory list.

Members noted that School Governors receive child protection training but this was not mandatory. Officers were asked to discuss with relevant officers whether this should also be mandatory.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN

The Working Group considered the Action Plan and noted that it had been divided into work for the following periods:

- Current Council 2015-2017
- Preparations for new Council 2017
- Council 2017-2018

The Working Group agreed the Action Plan with the following additions:
Current Council 2015-2017 –

- Develop a range of learning opportunities for Members – officers would review whether, with the new equipment in the Chamber, development sessions could be recorded and made into e-learning sessions for non-attenders. In addition, the All Wales Academy was proposing to develop a range of e-learning packages for members [see 5 iii) below].
- Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] Continuing Professional Development for Councillors [see 5 i) below] should be utilised when developing a Member Development Programme.

The Strategy and Action Plan would be emailed to Political Groups for comment.

5. MEMBER SUPPORT OFFICER NETWORK

The Working Group discussed the following which were considered at the Network meeting on 10th December, 2015:

i). Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] Continuing Professional Development for Councillors – Members considered that this was a useful document for Councillors and prospective candidates. It was agreed that further information should be included in the following sections –

1. Fundamentals - Confidentiality and handling confidential information
10. Partnership and representation – Work on outside bodies – add that Members need to take part in training provided by outside bodies. Also add in a section on Working as a Trustee on other organisations.

ii). Diversifying Democracy Project – The recommendations of the Expert Group, 'On Balance', Diversifying Democracy in Local Government has identified the need to increase the diversity of candidates at the next local government elections. As recommended by the Expert Group a mentoring programme will be developed. The programme will support and train members to act as mentors for people from under-represented

groups, who are interested in finding out more about local government and life as a county councillor. To support the programme, each local authority has nominated a member Diversity Champion to promote diversity within their local authority, County Councillor Darren Mayor being appointed by this Council. An email has been sent to Group Leaders to nominate a member mentor from the Council.

iii). All Wales Academy – e-learning packages for Members – the Academy was working with Councils to develop e-learning packages for Members. At the Network meeting officers considered that the WLGA's Continuing Professional Development for Councillors framework [see i) above] should influence the topics selected.

6. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Working Group received the summary evaluation forms for the following Member Development sessions:

- 21st November - Adult Social Care – the positive feedback was noted.
- 21st November - Stronger, safer & economically viable communities programme
- 8th December – School Governor – the Working Group noted the negative feedback for this session and that the Portfolio Holder and Head of Schools had been asked to consider the evaluation and the need for a further more focused session.
- 8th and 19th December – Webcasting - the positive feedback was noted.

The Working Group also received the evaluation summaries for the Speed Reading course on 3rd December which was provided for a number of Members as highlighted by them as a development need.

Due to the need for a Council meeting on 6th March, 2015 it was agreed to hold the next Working Group meeting on 10th March, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

County Councillor Sandra C. Davies
Chair