

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP
HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS,
POWYS ON MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2018**

PRESENT

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors G Breeze, L V Corfield, D O Evans, D Jones-Poston and
J Charlton

1.	APOLOGIES
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There were no apologies for absence.

2.	NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
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The notes of the meeting held on 13 November, 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

3.	WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT - WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION [WLGA]
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The Working Group received the letter from the WLGA regarding the renewal of the award of the Standard Charter. The Working Group thanked officers for their hard work in producing the application.

4.	DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
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The Working Group considered the draft strategy and the following comments were made:

- there is a need to review what we are trying to deliver in Member Development sessions – it may be necessary to rename Member Development sessions as Members' Seminars
- we need to find out in what Members are interested and then support them to develop these interests.
- we are asking Members to take responsibility for their development but they need a log of what they have done – it was noted that a record of development sessions attended is available on each Members' page on the website.
- Members need to know more about other services, not just the more high profile services, such as children and education – it was noted that the "Market Place" was trying to address this, but the demands on members on a Council day can make engaging with staff difficult. Officers advised that feedback from teams which had participated in these sessions was generally positive. Using different methods for informing members of services should be used - such as video, a number of short briefing sessions, eLearning.
- Accessing external development – e.g. WLGA Leadership Programme should be open to all members not just Cabinet, so that there is equality of access.
- Non-attendance at sessions – patterns of non-attendance would be checked. It was noted that it was proposed that Group Leaders should play a greater role in monitoring their Group Members' attendance.

Comments were made about the loss of the Shire Committees and the loss of links with Town and Community Councils. The Head of Democratic Services advised that in respect of the Shires, officers were considering how Members could be kept up to date on issues. The Welsh Government was undertaking a review of Town and Community Councils and the Council had no capacity to provide Code of Conduct training to them. One Voice Wales was in a better position to do this. In response to comments made about the number of scrutiny committees it was noted that the Joint Chairs was discussing this issue.

It was agreed that the draft strategy would be reviewed in light of the above.

5. PRE AND POST ELECTION SURVEY

The Working Group received the responses to the pre and post-election survey. Members were disappointed by the response rate of 33.3% but noted that 43.7% of new members had responded.

The following comments were made:

- Twr Brycheiniog was not a good venue in which to meet newly elected Members – officers advised that a venue next to the Count venue or space in the Count venue should be used. This would make it easier for newly elected Members to continue to see what is happening at the Count but also complete the necessary paperwork.
- In addition this would assist officers by lessening the numbers of Members arriving together at the same time. Officers had also been reassessing the forms which needed to be completed on the day and some of these could be completed later rather than on the day of the count.
- 1st induction day – officers/returning Members should be available to meet and greet new Members and take them around the main rooms at County Hall. Information about such things as catering etc. on the first day should be provided.
- Information about committees – more information on the roles of committees, working groups and other types of groups in which Members could be involved should be provided.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the feedback from Members would be used to inform the arrangements and information for the next election.

6. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Mandatory development

The Working Group received the revised Mandatory development details which reflected the recent decisions made by Council. The Head of Democratic Services advised that the information would be sent to Group Leaders. Comment was made that some sessions can be very dry and boring and other ways of providing these need to be considered.

6.2. Member Development Programme

There was no update on the Programme.

6.3. Member Development - review of evaluation form

The Working Group reviewed the current Member Development evaluation form.

It was considered that Members should be asked what their learning outcomes are. Officers advised that they hoped to use Survey Monkey to provide an online evaluation form.

6.4. Evaluation summaries

The Group received and noted the evaluation forms for the following sessions:

- 19 January and 28 February – Members' roles and responsibilities
- 22 January – Opposition Leaders and Deputies
- 5 February – Scrutiny & Audit Committees
- 9 & 23 January and 6 & 27 February - Cabinet sessions

The Chair referred the Working Group to the recent discussion at Council regarding the need to increase the number of women involved in public life. It was noted that the Democratic Services Committee's work plan included work on developing this and the need for the make up of councillors to reflect the County's population. As part of this work the Chair advised that officers were developing a programme of work on the role of women in public life to coincide with National Democracy Week. It was also noted that of 1800 new councillors in Wales only 19 people who had a disability had been elected. It was however noted that some councillors may have a disability but feel unable to discuss or disclose this. Individuals with a disability may perceive a barrier to them participating in public life and the Council needs to address this.

The Working Group noted that County Councillors Jackie Charlton and Beverley Baynham had been selected to participate in the Women's Equality Network's (WEN) Mentoring Scheme which aims to encourage women to become involved in public and political life.

The Chair referred to concerns raised by some Members regarding the apparent inaccuracies in the record of the votes at Council meetings, which are published with the minutes. The Head of Democratic Services advised that he had raised the issue with Bosch previously.

Members expressed their concerns and agreed that they had to have confidence in the system. Currently, the published records were a misrepresentation of how some Members voted.

The Working Group agreed that the Head of Democratic Services should liaise further with Bosch and report back to the Working Group/DSC and Council. It was also agreed that as the electronic voting system was not robust, Council should consider voting by a show of hands or recorded vote, in the interim, notwithstanding the fact that these systems take more time.

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)