

Minutes of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

**3rd November, 2017 at 2.00 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Lewis (Chair);
Councillor S Crumpton (Vice-Chair);
Councillors E M Giles, P Hughes, Sandars,
Shackleton, Trow and Underhill.

Observer: Mr R Tomkinson (Independent Person).

Apology: Ms J Williams (Independent Person).

14/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee, held on 8th September 2017, be confirmed as a correct record.

15/17 Proposed Elected Member Development Programme

The Committee considered proposals for a new Elected Member Development Programme.

The Council, in the past few years, had invested in member development and had successfully achieved the Member Development Charter accreditation from West Midlands Employers. However, over recent years, the subjective development model underpinning member development had shifted to a more objective one.

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The revised Member Development Programme had been designed to assist members to lead their own development and would ensure that they developed/acquired the requisite knowledge, experience and skills to succeed in their various councillor roles.

The Council sought to build upon its successes as a member-led Council and recognised that to do so all elected members had an important role to play. It was recognised that elected members could be appointed to various roles during their period of office (whether one or over several terms). The Member Development Programme was purposely designed to facilitate discussions and debate with all elected members and would specifically consider the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, committee member and representatives on an outside body.

Elected members had undertaken annual personal development plans and many undertook a wide range of training and other forms of development courses. However, there was a need to ensure the needs of members were better understood so the development programme was clearly aligned to those needs and delivered in a manner that members found engaging, thought-provoking and informative.

A joined-up Member Development Programme had therefore been developed to engage all members so that their needs could be properly examined and met. The programme would challenge and inform members so they were equipped to meet the requirements of the 2030 Vision.

The programme would be supported by facilitators, member peers (as far as possible) and use of member networks locally, regionally and nationally. Importantly, it encouraged elected members to share their expertise, local knowledge and experience to inform the whole development programme.

The development programme itself would follow a four-stage process:-

- initial discussion (scene setting);
- in-depth discussions (focus on knowledge, expertise, skills, support needs);
- focused workshops (key strategic and important issues discussed, i.e. localism, commercialisation, partnerships, etc);
- personal development plan.

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The process enabled sufficient engagement with all members and allowed members to be introduced to different ways of thinking, by working in a structured and informed way; this engagement was considered critical to the success of the programme.

The review of member development would also include a refresh of elected member induction arrangements.

To assist with the development and implementation of the Member Development Programme, it was proposed that a working group be established so that discussion and amendments to the programme could be agreed. Given the subjective nature of the programme, adopting this agile approach would ensure a bespoke and fit for purpose programme was achieved.

The Committee encouraged other professional techniques, such as team building exercises, to enable members to have a greater self-understanding of their strengths.

The Committee also identified the requirement to redefine job roles for members, in particular the role of Vice Chairs.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Elected Member Development Programme be approved;
- (2) that a Member Development Working Group be established, with Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix 1, consisting of Councillors Lewis, Trow and Underhill;
- (3) that the Director – Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Working Group, be authorised to procure external support considered necessary to support and facilitate the Elected Member Development Programme.

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16/17

Appointment of an Independent Member to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, arrangements must be put in place for the appointment by the Council of at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into account by the Council before it made a decision on an allegation against an elected member that it had decided to investigate. The Independent Person's views may be sought by a member or co-opted member of the Council if that person's behaviour was the subject of an allegation, and may also be sought by the Council in relation to an allegation it had not yet decided to investigate.

The Council had decided to have three Independent Persons. Following a resignation, there was currently one vacancy. In terms of a third member, to enable statutory processes to be followed a recruitment exercise would be carried out.

The Committee noted the role description, selection criteria and timeline for the process and agreed that the Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee would interview the candidates.

Resolved that the process to appoint an Independent Person to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee be approved.

17/17

Allegations Update

The Committee received a verbal update on complaints received in respect of member conduct.

(Meeting ended at 3.02 pm)

Contact Officer: Trisha Newton Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3193

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To support the development, implementation and delivery of a revised Elected Member Development Programme.

To support the accreditation process in relation to the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

Membership

Chairperson of the Standards and Member Development Committee (or his nominee).

Two other Members of the Standards and Member Development Committee (or their nominees)

Quorate and Meetings

At least two Members of the Working Group (inc. their nominees).

Meetings shall be held as required.

Decision-making

To provide a steer in relation to the development, implementation and delivery of the said Programme including the accreditation of the Member Development Charter.

To provide direction in respect of the details, content and methodology of the said Programme.

To agree any additional costs of developing and implementing the development programme.

To agree the final version of the Member Development Programme including methodology, content and implementation.

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Voting

By majority vote with the Chairperson or his nominee having a casting vote.

Access to Information Rules

The Working Group is not a constitutional meeting of the council or a sub-committee of the Standards and Member Development Committee and as such is not subject to the Access to Information Rules.