

MEETING OF ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 7th February, 2017

Members present: Councillor Graham (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers.

In attendance: Ms. J. Minne, Director of Organisational Development;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Ms. S. Williams; Programme Manager;
Ms. C. Christy, Human Resources Manager;
Ms. L. Rogan, Principal Human Resources / Organisational
Development Advisor; and
Miss. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st November were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Members' Portal – Update

The City Solicitor provided Members with an update regarding the development of the Members' Portal, which included the key issues, proposed design, content of the portal, and impending actions of the project.

He reminded the Working Group that the following three issues had been prioritised by Members:

- They were unable to easily find relevant information (key contacts and documents) both inside and outside the council;
- They felt swamped with council-related information (size of committee report packs, emails, phone calls, voice mails); and
- They wished to be able to resolve issues raised by constituents more easily.

He suggested that it would be helpful to carry out a pilot with a small group of Members at the end of March/beginning of April 2017 to gain feedback to make sure that the Portal was easy to use and the content was useful. He advised that the feedback would then be used to make enhancements to the layout, design and content.

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The Working Group agreed that Party Group Leaders would be asked to nominate a participant for the pilot of the Members' Portal system.

**Member Development Action Plan - Revised Personal
Development Planning Process**

The Principal Human Resources and Organisational Development Advisor outlined the contents of the report regarding the draft revised Personal Development Planning (PDP) Process, together with the PDP budget spend analysis, and the suggested list of facilitators to be invited to be included on call-off list for Member PDP facilitation..

She advised the Group that the planned approach to the process development involved seven steps, under the following themes:

1. A self-assessment exercise;
2. Independently facilitated, PDP discussion (optional);
3. Training Needs Analysis;
4. Modular Members' Capacity Building Programme;
5. Individual Member requests for learning and development;
6. Individual Members notified of the outcome of request; and
7. Evaluation and feedback from Members.

She also reminded the Working Group that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th January, had agreed that the Elected Members' PDP budget be reduced by £22,000, with a limit of £730 per Member.

She advised that the types of development activities that should be included in the PDP process and supported by the PDP budget for relevant subjects would be as follows:

- Conferences, seminars, workshops
- Best practice visits
- One to one coaching, mentoring or tailored training and development sessions
- Accredited training
- Party group development activities

She suggested that the following subject matters should not be included in the PDP process and supported by the PDP budget:

- Were linked to members personal profession or occupation or for further progression within their respective personal profession or occupation;
- Directly support party political objectives or positions; and
- Had tenuous links to the elected member role(s)

The Working Group noted the contents of the report and agreed to:

- the draft PDP approach, as set out in Appendix One, and for this to be issued to all members to obtain their feedback;

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- the list of suggested types of development activities and suggested subject matters that should be included in the PDP process and supported by the PDP budget; and
- the list of independent facilitators to be included on the call-off list for PDP facilitation.

Member Development Action Plan – Update

The Human Resources Manager provided an overview on the implementation of the Member Development Action Plan which included an outline of the following seven projects:

1. Participate in a pilot exercise to evaluate and provide feedback on the prototype Members' Portal prior to its roll out to all Members;
2. Develop new role profiles that reflect the developing role of the Elected Member in the Council and the delivery of the Belfast Agenda;
3. Revise the Political Skills Framework to make it bespoke to the Council and aligned to the agreed Member profiles;
4. Review and embed the personal development planning (PDP) process;
5. Agree on the appropriate development mechanisms and improvements for 2016-2017 and incorporate within a forward focussed Member capacity building action plan;
6. Develop an evaluation process for measuring the impact of Member development initiatives and programmes; and
7. On completion of the agreed projects, give consideration to establishing an Elected Member Steering Group to take forward an agreed Member development plan for the future.

She confirmed that the projects were on target and the following Member training activities had taken place since November, 2016:

- Welfare Reform;
- Planning Committee Continuing Development Programme; and
- QUB – Next Generation Leadership Programme.

She advised that the following training development activities were planned for February to April, 2017:

- Information Governance training – 9th and 28th February with an pilot e-learning module, which would be available for Members from April;
- Planning Committee continuing development programme – February/March;
- Women Leaders Programme – March;
- Equality training – 7th and 20th April; and
- Dementia Awareness Training.

She highlighted that given the interest which members had shown in accessing e-learning, additional areas or topics for pilot modules could also be developed.

Noted.

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Future Work - Capacity Building Plan and Governance Arrangements

The Director of Organisational Development advised that the Working Group had completed the main elements of the scheduled tasks which included:

- input in to the continued development of the Member Portal;
- development of a suite of Elected Member Role Profiles and the Members' Knowledge and Skills Framework; and
- agreement of the independent facilitated aspect of the revised Personal Development Planning process.

She highlighted that a high level Member Capacity Building Action Plan was yet to be developed for 2017-2018 along with an accompanying evaluation process for measuring the impact of member development initiatives and programmes. She advised that it was being designed specifically to take account and anticipate the emerging development themes which would be needed by Members to deliver the desired outcomes of the Belfast Agenda and the knowledge, skills and qualities identified in the agreed Members' Knowledge and Skills Framework and Member Role Profiles.

She suggested that, on completion of the projects, the Working Group recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee a preferred option for future governance arrangements to progress future member development work streams.

She outlined that possible options included to stand down the Elected Member Development Working Group and:

1. Request the Budget and Transformation Panel to consider future member development work and make recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
2. Have member development work directly considered by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee; or
3. Establish an Elected Member Development Steering Group to oversee member development work streams.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that, on completion of the work assigned to the Working Group, that future member development work and requests be submitted to the Budget and Transformation Panel for consideration, in the first instance, subject to the endorsement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Working Group also noted the contents of the report and agreed to a final meeting on 8th March to approve the revised PDP process, the high level member capacity building action plan and a report to confirm future governance arrangements.

Chairperson