

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP
HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS,
POWYS ON FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2015**

PRESENT

County Councillor S C Davies (Chair)

County Councillors PJ Ashton, D O Evans and M J Jones

1.	APOLOGIES	MDWG1-2015
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Apologies were received from County Councillor L.V. Corfield.

2.	NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS	MDWG2-2015
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The notes of the previous meeting held on 8th June, 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

3.	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	MDWG3-2015
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3.1. 2015 Programme

The Working Group noted the changes to the remainder of the 2015 Programme. It was noted that the additional session on 30th November regarding Members' responsibilities towards Gypsy and Traveller communities under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010 was on the first day of the Winter Fair. Comment was made that Members would need to make a choice as to what they attended.

Other items:

Notes for Members on how to access and use Modern.Gov – draft notes had been produced and it was agreed that these would be tested with a range of Members and amended as required, prior to circulation to all Members.

Data Protection Act training – details of which Members had not completed the training either via e-learning or paper had been requested. Those Members that had not completed the training would be followed up. It was noted that the Data Controller's Registration letter should be kept by Members at their home as spot checks can be made by the Information Commissioner.

3.2. 2016 Member Development Programme

The Working Group agreed the content of the 2016 Programme.

It was noted that a series of Health Seminars had been organised during the year. Due to the diary commitments of the Powys Health Board's Chief Executive the first seminar would need to be held on 29th January, 2016. The Treasury Management scheduled for this date would need to be changed as Richard Bason was unable to provide the session in the afternoon.

It was noted that the Sustainability Day scheduled for October 2015 had been cancelled and it was agreed to check to establish if another date would be arranged.

Other topics for sessions:

- Debating skills for Councillors – the Working Group agreed that this would be offered to Members on a first come first served basis.
- Welfare Reform – contact would be made with the County Councillor Joy Jones, Chair Anti-Poverty Social Research Group to provide a session for Members in the spring.

The Working Group was advised that Members were asking questions regarding how the Council was responding to the Syrian crisis. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder and officers would be attending a meeting with the Welsh Government in the next few weeks and that a press release would be circulated after this.

As the Working Group asked questions regarding press releases John Evans, Communication Manager attended the meeting. It was noted that a computer based system, with details of all local newspapers and news outlets such as the BBC, was used and press releases were sent to all these. It was however, up to news outlets as to what was used and when. The take up of press releases was 80%. In a year approx. 400 news releases are made and responses are made to 1500 – 1800 media inquiries.

4.	INFORMATION FOR NEW PORTFOLIO HOLDERS	MDWG4-2015
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The Working Group noted that as a result of changes in Portfolio Holders, discussion had taken place with one new Portfolio Holder as to what information would have assisted them when taking up their new position.

It was suggested that the following should also be included - details of all Strategic Directors, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and their PAs; details of the Cabinet Manager; the need to meet with Directors and Heads of Service in the first few weeks of appointment.

The draft was agreed and would be circulated to Portfolio Holders for comment and suggestions.

5.	MEMBERS' BUSINESS CARDS AND NEWSLETTERS	MDWG5-2015
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The Working Group received the draft proposal regarding the level of support Members would receive in respect of the provision of promotional materials, copying, typing and postage.

It was noted that there was no national guidance but The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its annual reports since 2011-12 had stated that authorities should provide support to meet member needs but that the level of support was for Councils to determine.

The Working Group noted the Options and agreed in principle that Guidance should be agreed to ensure that a fair support system for Members was introduced and supported officers in their ability to respond to requests.

It was agreed that the following would be clarified:

- The purpose of “Calling cards” and when they would be used. Could they be provided to all Members after an election or provided during their term of office.
- How would “Calling Cards” be distributed – by Members?
- The number of copies provided per “run” and the number of “runs” and whether this was per annum or for another period.
- What the number of copies would be based on – ward electoral numbers, number of households in wards or some other level.
- The costs associated with the above.
- The impact of purdah on the production of materials and range of support.
- Whether Members could claim copying and postage costs back from the Council.

A further report, with details of the above provided, would be considered by the next meeting.

6.	MEMBER AND OFFICER SUPPORT NETWORK	MDWG6-2015
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The minutes of the Member Support and Development Lead Member and Officer Network meeting held on 23rd September, 2015 were received for information.

The Working Group noted the following:

- The Local Government (Wales) Bill – from 2020 terms office would be for 5 years. A review of Town and Community Councils would take place in 2025. The result of Welsh Assembly elections in 2016 may impact on future changes. Council budgets will continually decrease and the number of councillors will reduce.
- Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – the Authority was not included in the initial review of the number of local authorities in Wales, as integration was being pursued with the Health Board. A review of Powys County Council would be undertaken first in the second tranche of reviews once reorganisation of local authorities had taken place. It was noted that a review on National Parks had been published.
- WLGA Member Support and Development 2015 -16 – it was noted that the role descriptions and member development framework had been amended to reflect the Welsh Audit Office review of safeguarding arrangements. This would be highlighted to the officers providing the safeguarding training.
- All Wales Academy – e-learning modules were now available and information would be sent to Members with a link via the Members’ Portal.

County Councillor S C Davies (Chair)