

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the Member Development Working Party held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 3 April 2008

Present:	Councillors: Mrs C E Drew (Chairman for the meeting) Miss V Ash G Godbeer Mrs P A Graham J Humphreys
Apologies	A T Moulding (Chairman) S Hughes (Portfolio Holder – Communications)
Also present:	Marion Geare, Devon Member Development Officer Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

The meeting started at 9.10 am and ended at 10.20 am

***10 Report of meeting**

Members noted the report of the meeting of Working Group held on 7 February 2008. Members recognised the importance of the reports of the meetings being referred on to the Executive Board for consideration.

***11 Outside Bodies – reporting back to Council**

Members were advised that a paper on the role, remit and reporting requirements of Members on Outside Bodies would be referred to the Annual meeting of the Council.

Currently Members who represented the Council on Outside Bodies were asked to report back to the Council. A note included in the Knowledge advised, when reports were received and that the papers had been filed in the Members' Area. Some Councillors regularly reported back to the relevant Portfolio Holders and Officers. However there was no standard reporting procedure in place and as a result the relevance of Members' role on Outside Bodies had been questioned.

A review of Outside Bodies was carried out annually to make sure that appointments continue to be relevant and of benefit to the Council and community.

- ACTION**
1. that it be made clear to Members why they have been appointed to an Outside Body, with a report on the role and remit of Councillors on Outside Bodies being referred to the Council's Annual Meeting,
 2. that improved feedback from Councillors on Outside Bodies be achieved by:
 - creating clear reporting links from the Outside Body to specific Portfolio Holders/Member Champions/Officers,
 - reporting on a standard feedback form to be posted on the Members' Page for information,
 - continuing to report on documents from Outside Bodies (such as minutes and annual reports) through the Knowledge with a means of encouraging Councillors to sign the file to indicate that they have read the document.

*12 **Member Personal Development Reviews**

At the last meeting, the Group had agreed to trial the Member Personal Development Reviews. Marion Geare, Devon Member Development Officer again attended the meeting to progress setting up the pilot scheme. Marion highlighted the need for a structured approach to identifying and meeting the learning and development needs of Members and supporting the organisation in achieving its goals.

It was suggested that the personal portfolios would include an introduction, the Corporate Strategy and Learning and Development Strategy, a skills framework, a means of assessing Councillor needs, a Personal Development Plan and record of personal development. There would be a section for 6 monthly reviews. The Plan was an on-going forward-looking process and reviews would facilitate evaluation to show the benefits being achieved and how these linked with the Corporate Strategy. Making this link where possible was a key consideration in the process. Development objectives needed to be clear with the ultimate goal of improving the way the Council functioned through helping Members to fulfil their roles and possible future roles. The skills framework had been used by Torbay Council which had recently been awarded the Member Development Charter

Members also discussed resource issues which would need to be addressed before the scheme was rolled out to all Members. Administration would include undertaking and tracking personal development plans, co-ordinating courses and learning opportunities, maintaining records of attendance and achievement and evaluating (with evidence) the success of development actions. Any system put in place had to be sustainable.

Prior to the trial, Members would need to agree on the content of the portfolio and how to progress the personal development plans and the methods of assessment. Members felt that it would be appropriate to examine the skills framework and sample role descriptions prior to the next meeting of the Working Party to decide what to include in the Portfolio.

Members discussed the importance of communication between Officers and Councillors and a wider appreciation of each others' roles. It was suggested that the 'Vanguard' systems thinking approach would not only reduce the number of processes but would put the customer at the heart of service delivery. This significant change in organisational culture would mean that the Council was customer-led. Councillor and Officer roles would support service delivery and meeting customer needs.

ACTION that details of Councillor role descriptions and the Devon skills framework be sent to Members in advance of the next meeting to enable Members to consider how these could best be used in the Personal Development Reviews, with a sample portfolio being referred to the next meeting of the Group for consideration.

*13 **Next Meeting**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Working Group be held on Friday, 2 May 2008 at 9.30 am.