

Member Support and Development Committee

14 July 2021

Present: Councillor D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Dr R Plummer and Councillor A Wilcox.

[Councillor M James arrived following the election of the Deputy Chair]

(Virtual Meeting: 2.00pm – 2.50pm)

1. Election of Chair

It was **unanimously resolved** that Mrs J James be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

[Mrs James then took the Chair and presided over the remainder of the meeting.]

2. Election of Deputy Chair

It was **unanimously resolved** that Councillor M Williams be elected Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Kidney and Councillor M Williams.

4. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was noted that there was a typographical error in the spelling of Park in resolution a) of the minutes.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 be confirmed and authenticated subject to the above correction.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Pilot 'Buddying' Project (Minute 4)

The Administration and Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that the pilot had been launched in July 2019 with three existing Welsh Government appointed Members 'buddying' with three newly appointed Welsh Government Members. Feedback had been sought regarding the project's effectiveness and how it could be



improved; two Members had responded, with one of these finding it more beneficial than the other. Positive aspects of the scheme had been that it had allowed Members to feel part of the Authority more quickly and it had been helpful in gaining another perspective on how the Authority worked. The Members had also suggested that it may have been more helpful to have been 'buddied' with a Member appointed by the County Council. It was concluded that it had been a useful exercise, however the challenge was to match suitable Members, which was difficult when Members were newly appointed.

Members of the Committee agreed that the buddying scheme should continue, but that participation should be encouraged, rather than being mandatory. It was also suggested that further consideration be given to the timing, perhaps to allow Members to get to know one another first. Thanking Members for their comments, the Officer advised that a report would be brought to the Authority prior to the Local Government elections in May 2022 when it was likely that new Members would be appointed to the Authority.

Noted.

7. Update on Member Development

It was reported that the application for Advanced Charter status of the Welsh Local Government Association's Wales Charter for Member Support and Development had been submitted. Due to the length of the submission, only the Charter criteria checklist had been appended to the report before Members that day and the format of this had been changed to make it easier to read. Details of the assessment process would be circulated when this was available.

Progress in the delivery of the Training Plan adopted by the Authority in September 2020 was also provided. It was noted that the 2021 personal development review process had now begun and to date 10 Members had completed their support plans. It was hoped that more Members would take part, particularly Members of the Committee, so that a more inclusive Training Plan could be compiled in the autumn. A reminder email would be sent to relevant Members.

Finally it was reported that Member attendance at meetings in the year to date stood at 88% (target 75%), while attendance at training events was 65% (target 65%). Anecdotal evidence had suggested that, while Members preferred face-to-face meetings/workshops, remote working had enabled them to attend more than would normally be the case. The Authority's carbon footprint had also been reduced by Members not having to travel to meetings. The officer apologised that the attendance



figures provided in the Charter submission had not been updated to reflect the current position.

Members thanked officers for their work in preparing the Charter submission and commended the level and focus of Member support and development, and the positive attitude towards this by the Chief Executive and other senior officers. Under A1 of the Charter criteria it was noted that there was a reference to the role description for Members serving on outside bodies and clarification was sought that this related to appointments made by the Authority rather than those serving in a personal capacity. It was confirmed that this was the case.

With regard to the training plan, one Member asked whether an up to date list of training workshop requests could be held somewhere accessible to them. The Administration and Democratic Services Manager replied that this would be possible once Microsoft 365 was introduced later in the year. Another Member asked about the relevance of the training plan if there was a substantial influx of new Members following the Local Government elections in 2022. The officer replied that the personal development review and training plan process was an annual one although it was acknowledged that often some elements had to be carried forward to the next plan. In addition some issues would be covered by the induction programme (to which all Members were invited) and other workshops, such as the Code of Conduct, were provided each year. The value of Members undertaking individualised learning experiences outside of the training plan, such as a day out with a Ranger or even attendance at public events organised by the Authority, was also emphasised.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) the Authority's submission for Advanced Charter status be noted;
- b) progress made to date on the Training plan be noted; and
- c) the Administration and Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to review the current Training Plan prior to a new Training Plan being drafted in the autumn.

