

## MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

5<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### Member representatives:

Mr A Archer, Councillor M James and Dr RM Plummer.

Mrs J James attended the meeting as an observer as she had been heavily involved with the Member support and development programme at the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

### Officer representatives:

Mr T Jones, Chief Executive and Mrs J Evans, Administration and Democratic Services Manager.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 11.00 a.m. – 12.20 p.m.)

#### 1. **Appointment of Chair**

It was **AGREED** that Mr A Archer be appointed Chair for the ensuing year.

#### 2. **Appointment of Deputy Chair**

It was **AGREED** that Dr RM Plummer be appointed Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

#### 3. **Disclosures of interest**

No disclosures of interest were received.

#### 4. **Minutes**

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 be confirmed and signed.

#### 5. **Member Development Training Plan**

The Administration and Democratic Services Manager reminded the Working Group that all Members had been asked to complete a self-assessment form to identify what development/support requirements would help them fulfil their role and to prioritise their 'top three' requirements.

Unfortunately, only eight forms were returned but, despite this disappointing fact, she considered that it was possible to develop a Training Plan for the forthcoming year. The report before Members therefore set out a summary of these training needs and a Training Plan had been developed from the top three priorities identified by the eight Members. The Plan also identified various methods in which the



development training could be delivered, e.g. by workshop, e-learning modules or practical/one-to-one sessions with officers.

The Administration and Democratic Services Officer added that other, more singular, needs had also been identified by some Members and these would be accommodated via a Personal Support Plan for the Members involved.

The Working Group agreed that a training plan presented all Members of the Authority with valuable opportunities that could bring, not only additional skills, but an extra perspective to their role. The Group also believed that there was a responsibility on all Members of the Authority to take part in these development opportunities, if only to strengthen existing skills and/or knowledge.

However, they considered that there were strategic issues of wider concern to the Authority which also needed to be taken into consideration in the prioritisation process. For example, while chairing meetings came out as a fourth priority in the training needs analysis, they were of the opinion that this should be ranked higher as it was essential to succession planning and, in particular, to becoming Chair of the Authority. Officers agreed to re-prioritise the training plan to take account of the Working Group's views.

It was **AGREED**:

- (a) that the Training Plan be re-prioritised in line with the views expressed at the meeting, and
- (b) that the Training Plan be presented to the meeting of the National Park Authority on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 for adoption.

## **6. The Wales Charter for Member Support and Development**

It was reported that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) encouraged all unitary authorities, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales to apply for the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development – a process which showed that authorities were committed to supporting and developing Members in their role. There were two levels to the Charter – Charter and Advanced Charter – and the Authority had been awarded Charter status in 2010, which had been renewed in 2014.

At the last meeting of the Working Group, Members had enquired as to whether the Authority was in a position to apply for Advanced Level status and the Administration and Democratic Services Manager had agreed to undertake a review of the processes already in place and to identify any



areas that needed to be progressed in order to be in a position to apply for the Advanced Level.

Appended to the report before the Working Group that day was a document which set out what evidence would need to be presented in a submission for Advanced Level status. It could be seen from the report that the majority of processes were already in place; however, in view of the fact that the membership of the Authority had changed substantially in recent years, both Members and officers agreed that there was a need to look again at the whole process and how best to take it forward.

It was considered that Members played an extremely important role in the Authority and a robust training and development programme was essential in order to help them make informed and sustainable decisions. The Working Group agreed that the Authority should aspire to attaining Advanced Charter status and, in order to do so, the Authority should reconfirm its commitment to Member support and development by raising the status of the Working Group to a Committee to drive the programme forward.

It was **AGREED**:

- (a) that the Authority should aspire to attaining the Advanced Charter for Member Support and Development, and
- (b) that the Administration and Democratic Services Manager present a report to a future meeting of the National Park Authority on establishing a Committee to drive forward the Member support and development programme.

