

11.1 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT (A.111/RC)

Purpose of the report

1. This report sets out proposals for the next annual programme of Member learning and development events (January - December 2016).

Recommendations

2.
 1. That the proposed Member learning and development events programme for January to December 2016 at Appendix 1 be agreed.
 2. That Member learning and development activities continue to be recorded in terms of hours and include personal learning and development by Members outside of events organised by the Authority, with the target of 20 hours per Member in every 12 months.

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. This work contributes to achieving the corporate objectives for 2015/16 as part of the 4 Cornerstones to building a solid foundation:
 - Cornerstone 4 - Developing our organisation so we have a planned and sustained approach to performance at all levels (people, money, outputs)
 - a. A solid performance management approach
 - b. A clear plan for the future to give ourselves strategic certainty for 2016/17 and beyond

The Authority aims to enable members to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours to improve effectiveness and fulfil their role as a member of the authority and to ensure that processes are in place to support this within a framework of good governance and continuous improvement.

Background

4. In October 2007 the Authority agreed a revised approach to Member Learning and Development. The full report can be found at:
<http://resources.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ctte/authority/reports/2007/071005Item10-4Annex1.pdf>.
5. In October 2009 (minute 74/09) Members agreed to a number of actions to progress towards achieving the East Midland Development Charter and setup a member learning and development task team to help outline the Authority's future approach to:
 - Producing future member personal development plans
 - Reviewing member development plans when in place
 - Member appraisals
 - Developing members to take on leadership roles including formal committee roles and Member Representative roles
 - Encouraging all members to participate in the essential events of the annual programme
6. Since the Group reported back, to deliver savings, the Authority reduced the level of direct support given to Members by the Democratic Services Team. While this decision has had an impact on the timescales in which the Authority will meet the requirements of the Charter, it is still a longer term aspiration to meet the Charter Standard and the proposals in this report continue our steps towards this.

7. At the AGM in July 2014 it was agreed to re-instate the Member representative role for Member Learning & Development and Cllr Peter Harrison was appointed as the new representative. However, following the Parish Member elections this year Cllr Harrison is no longer a Member of the Authority and at the AGM in July this year the Member Representative post was left vacant pending a review of all the Member representative roles.
8. Although the Authority continues to provide direct support, one of the key principles for Member Learning & Development is that Members are asked to take individual responsibility for their training and development. This includes:
 - Some element of self-assessment on areas for improving effectiveness
 - Making the most of opportunities offered both at the Authority and elsewhere
 - Making the most of experiences available to Authority Members – talks and walks etc.
9. The attached Learning and Development Plan, and the activities included within it, aim to support members in meeting their Learning and Development responsibilities.
10. In September 2010 progress in delivering the approach agreed in 2009 was reported to the Authority. The learning and development programme was divided into three categories: essential events for all Members, desirable events for all members and events to meet identified needs for some members. It also introduced the idea of providing briefings at the end of the Authority meeting rather than calling Members in on additional days. This style of training programme was continued for 2011/12 with a slight amendment to highlight the distinction between events focusing on progressing the Authority's business which either included an element of learning but were essential to involving Members in moving the work of the Authority forward and events focussing on meeting the needs in Members' Personal Development Plans. Also following feedback from a Member workshop in 2011 the Learning and Development Plan was divided up into three sections:
 - Core Learning and Development Events organised by the Authority for which attendance by all Members is either essential or desirable.
 - New Member Induction Events which are essential or desirable for those recently appointed to the Authority
 - Optional learning and development opportunities which have been identified by Members during recent workshops or in their personal development plans.
11. The final group of opportunities was divided further into groups as identified in the Members skills matrix previously agreed by the Authority:
 - Developing Skills
 - Governance Performance & Scrutiny
 - Strategic & External Leadership
 - Improving knowledge of the work of the National Park Authority
12. Since then a clear message from Members has been that there should be fewer formal learning and development sessions and more opportunities for personal development through other methods such as e-learning, workbooks and shadowing officers. The final group of opportunities in the Learning & Development Plan for 2011/12 was aimed to progress this by asking Members to look at them and identify two of those areas they had an interest in pursuing during the forthcoming year. The mode of delivery of these elements was then dependent on the level of interest and preferences of individual members. In choosing from the programme Members were asked to have regard to issues identified in their self assessment and their personal learning and development plan, while being realistic about what is achievable in a year

and the Corporate targets for Member Learning and Development.

13. Some optional choices have again been included in the learning and development programme for 2016.
14. In 2011 it was agreed that performance in Member Learning & Development would be reported in terms of hours rather than days. This was to allow us to capture relevant personal learning and development by Members outside of opportunities provided by the Authority. A target of 20 hours per Member within a 12 month period was agreed (Minute 59/11).

Proposals

Learning and Development Plan

15. The proposed learning and development plan for 2016 is attached at appendix 1. The format is the same as in the previous 4 years and this is explained in paragraphs 9 to 11 above.
16. There have been 6 new Members this year and all have been asked if they would like to meet with an external facilitator to produce a Personal Development Plan (PDP). At present there has only been one expression of interest in this offer. Of the remaining 24 Members, currently 13 have a PDP in place. Of the 11 Members who do not have a PDP some have previously indicated that they do not wish to take up the opportunity, however these Members can still request the opportunity to meet with an external facilitator if wished. Provision of training opportunities for any extra areas/issues identified by new PDPs will be considered by the Democratic and Legal Support Team as necessary.
17. New Members are also offered the option of having a 'Buddy' Member. A 'Buddy' Member is an existing Member who is willing to mentor a new Member, help them with settling into their new role and to support them through their first 6 months or so. 'Buddy' Members were introduced as part of the new Member induction process in 2010 and of the new Members this year so far 1 has requested a 'Buddy'.
18. All expressions of interest and recording participation in activities will be co-ordinated by the Democratic & Legal Support Team. As in the previous 4 years each Authority Member will be able to choose a maximum of two optional items from the list for 2016 and all choices need to be submitted to the Democratic and Legal Support Team by 1 December 2015. Arrangements for providing the optional elements will then be considered.
19. Where possible additional briefings during the year are scheduled for Authority meeting days and this practice will continue for 2016.

Recording and Measuring Performance

20. It is proposed that learning and development activities continue to be recorded in terms of hours and include personal learning and development by Members outside of events organised by the Authority, with the target of 20 hours per Member in every 12 months, as agreed last year.
21. Records for 2014/15 show that 24% of Members (7 Members) almost obtained the target of 20 hours, a decrease of 5% from last year, and 34% (10 Members) exceeded the target of 20 hours, an increase of 1% from last year, just by attending workshops and training/development sessions provided by the Authority. The percentage of Members recording less than 10 hours of learning and development has doubled this year to 20% (6 Members). However this figure may have been affected by the

changes in Membership over the past year.

22. During 2013 a self-assessment form for Members was trialled with the Secretary of State appointed Members in May and then rolled out to all remaining Members in August. Members were asked to complete the self-assessment form and, for those who have them, to review their current personal development plans at the same time. The self-assessment form helps to capture Members' contributions towards the Authority's work and towards their learning and development target, whilst also identifying future learning and development needs. The self-assessment was repeated in 2014 and 2015 and will continue to be done annually. The period for self-assessment is from 1 April to 31 March each year. Members joining the Authority towards the end of this period will not be asked to complete a form for that year.
23. This year the self-assessment forms were sent out during April/May and 55% (14 Members) of eligible Members (26) returned completed forms. An increase of 11% from last year. This year Defra requested business cases to support re-appointments of Secretary of State appointed Members and the completed self-assessment forms were invaluable in helping to draft these.
24. Attendance at essential activities will continue to be monitored and reported to the Authority.
25. In considering the proposals in this report the following performance data is relevant:

Data	Results and comments
Member participation in training/briefing events	2012/13: 67.2% (11.2% more than 2011/12) 2013/14: 61% (6% less than 2012/13) 2014/15: 62% (1% more than 2013/14)
2014 Member Survey: (Based on 60% returns)	*Percentage of members who feel valued: 61.1% (*47.7% in 2012, 69.5% in 2010 and 67% in 2008 surveys) Percentage of members who feel developed by the Authority: 94% (81% in 2012, 83% in 2010 and 76% in 2008 surveys) *The 2012 figure was low as 47.6% of Members felt unable to comment and it is thought that this is due to the fact that the Authority appointed 9 new Members that year.
Number of Members with personal development plans	44% have a plan in place (remaining the same percentage as the last 2 years). Of the 17 who do not have a plan, 6 are new Members who have been offered the option to have a plan. The remaining 11 have either previously declined or not taken up any of the interview dates offered but all will be offered the opportunity to have a plan again.
Evaluation of training provided in 2014/15	Key messages from evaluation forms include: a) % of members who felt objectives of workshops were met over 10 workshops = range: 72%-100% over workshops b) % of Members who rated the workshop 'good' over 10 workshops = range: 70%-100%

26. Management Team, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and the Democratic Services Manager have all been consulted on this report.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

27. **Financial:**

Member development costs are funded by the Democratic Services budget and includes funding for all training including attendance at National Parks UK conferences and workshops and the external facilitation of member development plans.

28. As part of the budget planning work in 2011/12 year there was a reduction in staff resource in the then Democratic Services team and in other teams across the Authority. In 2013/14 further reductions in staff resources were made within the Democratic Services Team, now titled Democratic and Legal Support Team. This means expenditure and support to member development has to be prioritised to take account of reduced resources and we cannot do everything we might want to in our aspirations to achieve the Charter in the near future.

29. **Risk Management:** The main risk is failure to enable Members to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours to improve effectiveness and fulfil their role. The Authority has provided development opportunities for Members for many years. The proposals in this report are part of continuous improvement in our approach but proportionate to the future resources available.

30. **Sustainability:** There are no issues to highlight.

31. **Background papers:** None

30. **Appendices -**

Appendix 1: Proposed programme of member learning and development events for January – December 2016.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Ruth Crowder, Democratic and Legal Support Team Leader, 24 September 2015.