

MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13 – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report contains the mid-programme review of the 2012/13 Member Learning and Development Programme.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In line with budgetary considerations, Member training sessions are now arranged in two phases – May to July and October to November.
- 2.2 The mandatory training requirements in respect of membership of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees have been achieved for Phase 1 of the Programme. A planning-related course is being offered in Phase 2 of the Programme, with attendance at this or the Members' Tour of the District on 8 September fulfilling Members' mandatory training requirement for Phase 2.

3 TRAINING PROGRAMME TO DATE

- 3.1 The following courses were held in Phase 1 of the Programme:-

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| * | Mandatory training for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees | - Development
- Licensing
- Appeals |
| * | Course for Audit Committee Members | - Role of the Audit Committee and the External Auditor |
| * | Induction/Refresher Courses for all Members | - Ethical Framework/New Standards Regime

- Changes resulting from the Welfare Reform Act 2012

- Freedom of Information (FOI)/Data Protection Acts

- Housing – Homelessness and Allocations

- Planning - Section 106 obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy. |

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- 3.2 The evening session of the mandatory Development Committee training was cancelled due to the unavoidable unavailability of the trainer. To provide Members with a further opportunity to fulfil the requirement for planning training in May, a further course was arranged for 25 May at 10 am.
- 3.3 In order to deliver planning training to newly elected members of the Council that would cover information on planning policy and planning legislation, the Head of Planning and Transportation ran a course on 22 May that was designed specifically and mandatory for the three Members elected in May.
- 3.4 The development sessions have been provided through a combination of specialist training providers and Council officers. Wherever appropriate, Rochford District Council officers have been used.
- 3.5 The Public Law Partnership held a Local Government Standards information event on 17 September 2012 at Castle Point Borough Council offices in Benfleet. The event covered aspects of the Localism Act relating to Standards and was aimed at Monitoring officers and Independent Persons of Local Authority Standards Committees. Rochford District Council legal officers and two of the Independent Persons attended the event. Topics discussed included registration requirements, disclosable pecuniary interests, declarations at meetings, dealing with complaints and new criminal offences under the new regulations.
- 3.6 The Head of Planning and Transportation organised additional planning training, held on 18 July 2012, which covered the legal requirements around Section 106 obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 3.7 All of the courses in the 2012/13 Programme will be held at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 3.8 The attendance by Rochford District Council Councillors at the training courses to date is appended. The figures show a marked increase in attendance when compared with attendance figures reported to the Standards Committee for the same period in 2011/12.

Review Committee

- 3.9 A course was held for Review Committee Members on 30 May 2012 entitled 'Introduction to Scrutiny in Rochford', which was delivered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Officer. A further course for Review Committee Members has been arranged to be held on 13 November 2012, which will be delivered by Tim Young, an independent scrutiny advisor.

4 FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

The following courses are scheduled to take place within the second part of the programme in October and November 2012:-

Mandatory Development Committee (This is in addition to the Tour of the District, which was held on 8 September.)

Courses for all Members of the Council:-

- Community Budgeting
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)/Police and Crime Panels (PCPs)
- Census 2011 Data and Priorities for Health and Wellbeing in the District

All courses will be delivered by Rochford District Council officers.

- 4.1 The Member training date scheduled for 15 November has been cancelled due to its clash with the Police and Crime Commissioner election, scheduled for that date. An additional Member training date has been arranged for Wednesday 31 October (at 1.30 and 7.30 pm as usual).
- 4.2 A training date scheduled for Thursday 1 November will be utilised for a special budget session for all Members.
- 4.3 Every two years the Council provides training in the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) for senior officers and Members of the Review Committee. Arrangements are being made for the next programme of RIPA training, which is due to take place in January 2013.
- 4.4 In partnership with Vine HR Limited (formerly Essex Strategic HR Partnership) a suite of e-learning courses has been developed across the eastern region and is available for sharing among authorities. Rochford District Council has an e-learning platform that officers are currently using for core mandatory training in subjects such as Freedom of Information and Equalities and Diversity. As key topics such as these are becoming increasingly important for the Council, it is felt that it would be beneficial for Members also to have access to this form of learning. Further information on this will be available in due course

5 CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The recommitment to the Charter for Elected Member Development will be due in October 2013. The process involved will be less time-consuming than the original application, which the Council made in 2010. The assessors will undertake a reassessment of the Council's Member training programme, paying particular attention to the 'direction of travel' since the award was

achieved in October 2010.

- 5.2 The cost of recommitment to the Charter standard will be £2,250, which can be met from the Member training annual budget of £8,800 for 2012/13. A full report will be made to the Standards Committee on 11 April 2013. At this stage Members are asked to endorse the commitment of funds through the budgetary process for renewal of the Charter.

6 MANDATORY PLANNING TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 Due to the increasingly complex nature of planning legislation, it is proposed that there be more regular planning training sessions throughout the year and greater penalties for non-attendance. It is vital that Members have an adequate understanding of national and local planning policy to enable them to perform their role as Members of the Development Committee.
- 6.2 It is proposed that the following arrangements for mandatory planning training be introduced in the 2013/14 Municipal Year.
- 6.3 Four sessions of mandatory planning training will be timetabled to take place during the year, which Members will be expected to attend, with a minimum requirement that each Member attends three out of the four sessions. Should a Member miss a session, he/she will be 'rested' from the Development Committee until he/she attends a further scheduled mandatory planning training session. A minimum of three training sessions must be attended each municipal year. The training will be based on a 'rolling program' from one year to the next.
- 6.4 A Member who is 'rested' from the Development Committee will be able to speak on an item but not vote (as is now the case for Members who have not attended prescribed mandatory training) until after he/she has attended the next compulsory planning training session.
- 6.5 Newly elected Members will need to attend the first possible planning training session (likely to be in May). If they miss this they will not become a Member of Development Committee until they have attended a compulsory training session.
- 6.6 In respect of any of the four sessions missed, Members who have not attended a session will be given any handouts from the session.
- 6.7 The Members' Tour of the District should be removed from the mandatory training programme as it is inadequate for this to be attended in place of other mandatory planning training. The Tour will continue to be held, however.
- 6.8 Under the new arrangements there will be no facility whereby a Member can apply for exemption from mandatory training to the Standards Committee. Membership of the Development Committee will be restored following attendance at the next scheduled mandatory training session.

- 6.9 There will be no 'mop-up' sessions offered for Members who do not attend mandatory training courses.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of Member training is met from the Council's Member training budget, which is set at £8,800 for 2012/13.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 At the start of this financial year a charge for Parish/Town Councils was introduced for those training courses considered appropriate. It was also agreed that Parish/Town Councils should continue to be invited to attend appropriate Member training events for those courses that the Council organises either specifically for Town/Parish Councillors or where the training is on a topic where it would benefit the District Council for Parish/Town Councils to attend.
- 8.2 In Part 1 of the Programme (May – July 2012) there was no take-up of the training sessions offered at a charge to Parish/Town Councils. However, in June the Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer delivered a training course for Parish/Town Councils in the Council Chamber, Civic Suite, Rayleigh. All Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks were invited to attend the session, which covered the provisions of the new Standards regime introduced in the Localism Act 2011 dealing with Member conduct and standards. There was no charge for this course.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES:-**
- (1) To note the 2012/13 Mid-Programme Review.
 - (2) To endorse the re-commitment for renewal of the Charter for Elected Member Development of funds through the budgetary process in the amount of £2,250.
 - (3) To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the arrangements for mandatory planning training, as detailed in report paragraphs 6.1 to 6.9 be adopted in the 2013/14 municipal year.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None.

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MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2012/13

MID PROGRAMME REVIEW

Attendance Figures to Date

	Date	Title of Course	No. of Attendees
Mandatory Training Sessions (For Members of the relevant Committee)	15 May 2012 (1 session)	Development Committee	31
	22 May 2012	Introduction to Development Committee (for new Members)	3
	25 May 2012	Development Committee (Extra session)	7
	24 May 2012	Licensing Committee	13
	27 June 2012	Licensing Committee (Extra session)	2
	21 June 2012	Appeals Committee	10
For Members of the Audit Committee	29 May 2012 (1 session)	Role of the Audit Committee and External Auditor	15
Induction/ Refresher Courses for All Members	14 June 2012 (2 sessions)	Ethical Framework/ New Standards Regime	21
	27 June 2012 (2 sessions)	Changes resulting from the Welfare Reform Act 2012	18
	12 July 2012 (2 sessions)	Freedom of Information/ Data Protection Acts	16
	18 July 2012 (2 sessions)	Planning – Section 106 obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (additional training)	24
	19 July 2012 (2 sessions)	Housing - Homelessness and Allocations	20