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## MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2013/14

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2013/14.

### 2 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS 2012/13

- 2.1 A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period 15 May 2012 to 8 November 2012 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Mandatory training took place for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees. One Member of the Development Committee did not fulfil the mandatory training requirement in Part 2 of the Programme and was removed as a Member of the Committee from January 2013 to the end of the Municipal Year.
- 2.3 In addition to the opportunities provided by this Council's learning and development programme, Members were able to take advantage of two Member Away Days on the budget in November 2012 and January 2013.
- 2.4 A Member budget briefing forum was held on 1 November 2012, using one of the designated Member training dates, to discuss the Council's budget for 2013/14. This Forum provided Members with details of the budget process, key changes affecting local authority financing and implications, as well as an opportunity to consider the topics that would be considered in more detail at the Budget Awaydays in November and January.
- 2.5 A Local Government Association 'peer support' programme of development for newly appointed Members of the Executive was taken up by Cllr Mrs J McPherson, Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care and Well-Being, Health and Community Safety. Cllr Howard Doe, Cabinet Member and previous Leader of Medway Council, was agreed as mentor and the programme commenced towards the end of 2011. The Portfolio Holder has reported that the mentoring scheme was beneficial. Cllr Doe was very knowledgeable and Cllr Mrs McPherson felt that it was good to have someone independent to bounce ideas and issues off. The arrangement provided an opportunity to see how another authority works and to forge links with another Council.
- 2.6 An information event entitled 'Local Government Standards' for Legal Services/Monitoring Officers and Independent Persons held on 17 September 2012 was offered free of charge by the Public Law Partnership. This was attended by representatives from the Council's Legal team and two of the Standards Committee's Independent Persons.
- 2.7 The Review Committee has its own programme of training. Members of the Committee attended three courses in 2012/13. The first was an Introduction

to Overview and Scrutiny at Rochford, run by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny officer. The second course, 'Overview and Scrutiny - Developing Scrutiny', was run by Tim Young, an Associate Member from the Centre of Public Scrutiny. The Members of the Review Committee also attended a training session with officers on the changes to provisions under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

- 2.8 The Council's Head of Planning and Transportation delivered a mandatory planning training course to new Members in May 2012. Although attendance at this course fulfilled their mandatory planning training requirement new Members were also encouraged to attend the Development Committee training session on 15 May.
- 2.9 The Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer ran a training course for Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks on 19 June 2012 in the Council Chamber. The course covered the provisions of the new Standards regime introduced in the Localism Act 2011 dealing with Member conduct and standards. Attendance was good and the majority of the District's Parish/Town Councils were represented. Following a request, there was a further course run for Rayleigh Town Council on 21 June 2012.
- 2.10 In addition to the scheduled mandatory planning training courses, the Head of Planning and Transportation ran a planning training session for Members on 18 July 2012 at 1.30 pm and 7.30 pm, which covered material considerations relevant to the determination of planning applications and Section 106 contributions.

### **3 MANDATORY PLANNING TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed:-
- (1) That four sessions of mandatory planning training will be timetabled to take place during the year, which Members will be expected to attend. Should a Member miss two consecutive training sessions he/she will be rested from the Development Committee until he/she attends a further scheduled mandatory planning training session. This training will be based on a rolling program from one year to the next.
  - (2) That a Member who is rested from the Development Committee will be able to speak on an item but not vote until after he/she has attended the next compulsory training session.
  - (3) That newly elected Members will need to attend the first possible planning training session (likely to be May). If they miss this they will not become a member of the Development Committee until they have attended a compulsory training session.
  - (4) That handouts will be provided to Members who have missed any training sessions.

- (5) That the Members' tour of the District be removed from the mandatory training programme as it is inadequate for this to be attended in place of other planning training. The tour will continue to be held, however.
- (6) That, under the new arrangements, there will be a facility whereby a Member can apply for dispensation from a Mandatory Training Session to the Standards Committee. In order to be granted this dispensation it will be expected that the Member will be able to demonstrate that they have achieved the appropriate standard, under their own cognisance, commensurate with the standard of knowledge achieved by their peers, which would have been provided by the two training sessions that they had missed. In order to expedite this it is anticipated that a tribunal of three members of the Standards Committee, the Chairman or Vice Chairman and two others, will meet as soon as possible to hear the application for dispensation. The Monitoring Officer, or his representative, will be in attendance.
- (7) That no 'mop-up' sessions are offered for Members who do not attend mandatory training sessions.

#### **4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT – JANUARY 2013**

- 4.1 In accordance with usual practice, at the end of the annual training programme, all Members were provided with a self-assessment questionnaire seeking feedback on the 2012/13 learning and development programme and details of any individual learning and development requests for 2013/14.
- 4.2 27 questionnaires have been returned to date (a response rate of 73%). A summary of responses is attached as Appendix 2. Key findings from the responses received to date are that:-
  - The vast majority of respondents found the training sessions very useful or useful and answered that 'information obtained', 'the opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors' and 'ideas you could put into practice' were the most useful aspects of the training. There were also comments that a training session can provide Members with an opportunity to discuss matters with officers in an informal setting.
  - For those Members who found it difficult to attend many learning and development sessions, work/family commitments and having already attended similar courses were the most quoted reasons.
  - As far as learning styles are concerned, most respondents found a lecture style of training with PowerPoint presentation the most useful. Interactive training, e.g. workshops/role playing/case studies, learning from others, e.g. shadowing/mentoring, visiting other authorities to learn from best practice elsewhere and external conferences were also valued by respondents.

**5 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2013/14**

- 5.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2013/14.
- 5.2 The Member Learning and Development Programme needs to be responsive to the corporate priorities of the Council, as well as the individual training needs of Members identified through the self-assessment questionnaires (see paragraph 4.2 above).
- 5.3 In accordance with agreed practice, a plan showing all dates for Member learning and development in the 2013/14 Municipal Year was provided to Members at the beginning of the calendar year. This plan included specific dates for mandatory training.
- 5.4 The Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development on 5 October 2010, with the training programme being described as an example of best practice by the assessors, South East Employers (SEE). Charter status was awarded for three years, an interim review having been undertaken in April 2012 via a conference call. The Council has committed to renewal of the Charter, which is due in October 2013. The assessing body, SEE, have advised that they will be looking to identify Rochford's 'direction of travel' since achieving the award in 2010.
- 5.5 The Council is required to provide training every two years for key officers and Members of the Review Committee on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). RIPA regulates the powers of the Council to carry out surveillance and investigation. The Council's Review Committee provides a strategic overview of the Council's use of RIPA powers by way of reviewing the policy and considering statistical reports on usage on an annual basis. RIPA training was delivered to Review Committee Members and officers on 12 February 2013.
- 5.6 The development of e-learning courses for Members is now underway, initially in areas such as Freedom of Information and Equalities and Diversity. These courses will be developed in partnership with Vine HR Limited.
- 5.7 The Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council, produced for prospective candidates standing for election to the Council, has been updated for the 2013/14 Municipal Year. The Guide provides information on the role of the Councillor and includes the dates of mandatory training in the 2013/14 Municipal Year. As well as being distributed to prospective candidates, the Guide is available on the Council's website.
- 5.8 There will be circumstances where it is advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions. This can provide a better use of resources in areas such as skills training and understanding new legislation. An example of this in last year's training was the mandatory Licensing Committee training, where officers from the Legal and Licensing

teams attended alongside Members.

Mandatory/Induction/Refresher Training – May to July 2012

- 5.9 Based on the above, the following Programme is proposed at this stage for the training slots identified from May to July 2012:-

May	Mandatory Planning training Mandatory Licensing training Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct
June/July	Probation Service – the offender's journey Mandatory Appeals training Treasury Management to be advised Emergency Planning

- 5.10 The Review Committee has its own specific programme. Dates have been allocated in the Council's meetings timetable specifically for Review Committee training.
- 5.11 The learning and development booklet will contain details of the purpose and objectives of each course and who the courses are most suitable for. The booklet will also state that the training programme has been formulated to help the Council meet its corporate objectives and will show linkages between courses and corporate objectives.
- 5.12 In accordance with requests from Members, it is intended that the majority of the training programme will be delivered by officers, supplemented by external trainers where appropriate. Where possible, all training courses will be held in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 5.13 It is proposed to continue to arrange the majority of courses in the afternoon and then repeat them in the evening. The aim will be for each course to last a maximum of two and a half hours, with a 15 minute refreshment break part way through. There could be occasions when these timings need to be reviewed in order to accommodate training that may need a longer session or where there are costs of using external training providers. Mandatory Licensing training will, as usual, be run as one afternoon session, as will the mandatory training for Appeals Committee Members. The Probation Service will be delivering an evening session only.

## **6 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING**

- 6.1 The Parish/Town Councils continue to be invited to attend courses organised by the Council 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.

- 6.2 The Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer delivered a course on the Ethical Framework/New Standards Regime for Parish/Town Councils in June 2012. In November 2011 the Council's Head of Planning and Transportation offered a specially tailored planning course - The National Planning Policy Framework Considered – to Parish/Town Councils.
- 6.3 The Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer has arranged to deliver a training course on the Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct to the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils Members at its meeting on 25 April 2013.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The cost of Member learning and development is met from the Member training budget, which is set at £3,500 for 2013/14. Parish/Town Council attendees are charged if considered appropriate.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To receive the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2012/13 as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10.
  - (2) To endorse the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2013/14 as set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

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### **Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power or John Bostock on:-

Phone: 01702 318179

01702 318130

Email: [michelle.power@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.power@rochford.gov.uk)

[albert.bugeja@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:albert.bugeja@rochford.gov.uk)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

## Appendix 1

# MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY– NOVEMBER 2012

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Probity/Regulatory	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom		Optional	
					P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
Mrs P Aves					2	2	7	5	3	2	3	0
C I Black					2	2	7	2	3	0	3	0
P A Capon					2	2	7	0	3	0	3	0
Mrs T J Capon					2	2	7	0	3	0	3	0
M R Carter			*		3	3	7	3	3	0	2	1
J P Cottis					2	2	7	0	3	0	3	0
T G Cutmore	&	#	*		3	3	7	4	3	2	2	1
Mrs H L A Glynn		#	*		4	4	7	5	3	3	1	0
T E Goodwin					2	2	7	1	3	0	3	0
K J Gordon	&				2	2	7	0	3	0	3	0
J E Grey		#	*		3	3	7	1	3	0	2	0
J D Griffin			*		3	3	8	3	3	2	2	0
Mrs A V Hale		#	*	+	3	3	8	4	3	1	1	0
B T Hazlewood			*	+	3	3	8	7	3	2	2	1
Mrs D Hoy			*		3	3	7	4	3	1	2	0
M Hoy			*		2	2	8	5	3	0	2	0
K H Hudson	&		*		4	4	7	4	3	2	1	0
Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	&		*		3	3	7	5	3	2	2	0
C J Lumley					2	2	7	4	3	2	3	0
Mrs J R Lumley		#	*	+	2	2	8	5	3	1	2	0

**KEY**

- P** – total number of attendances possible  
**A** – actual number of sessions attended  
**~** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council  
**&** – Executive Member  
**#** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee/Sub-Committee  
**\*** – Probity/Regulatory (covering Audit, Appeals and Licensing Committees). All Members are appointed to the Development Committee  
**+** – Members of the Review Committee

## Appendix 1

### MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY– NOVEMBER 2012

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Probity/Regulatory	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom		Optional	
					P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
M Maddocks	&		*		4	4	7	6	3	2	1	0
Mrs C M Mason					2	2	7	1	3	0	3	0
J R F Mason				+	2	2	7	1	3	0	3	0
Mrs J E McPherson	&		*		3	3	7	3	3	0	2	0
D Merrick		#	*		3	3	7	5	3	2	2	1
Mrs J Mockford ~					2	2	7	6	3	3	3	0
T E Mountain		#	*	+	2	2	8	1	3	1	2	0
R A Oatham			*		4	4	7	1	3	2	1	0
R D Pointer		#	*	+	2	1	8	2	3	0	2	0
Mrs C E Roe			*	+	2	2	8	6	3	2	2	0
C G Seagers	&				2	2	7	6	3	3	3	1
S P Smith		#			2	2	7	1	3	1	3	0
D J Sperring			*		4	4	8	7	3	2	1	0
M J Steptoe	&		*		3	3	7	3	3	1	2	1
I H Ward		#	*	+	3	3	8	8	3	2	1	1
Mrs M J Webster		#			2	2	7	1	3	1	3	0
P F A Webster					2	2	7	0	3	0	3	0
Mrs C A Weston		#	*		4	4	7	6	3	1	1	1
Mrs B J Wilkins ~			*		2	2	8	8	3	3	2	1

**KEY**

- P** – total number of attendances possible  
**A** – actual number of sessions attended  
**~** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council  
**&** – Executive Member  
**#** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee/Sub-Committee  
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## Appendix 2

**Member Development Self-Assessment – March 2013**

Total sent out 37

Total returned 27

73 % return

## 1. In general, did you find the training sessions

Very useful

15

Useful

11

Could be improved

2

Poor

0

## 2. What did you find most useful about the training?

Information obtained

22

Ideas you could put into practice

9

Opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors

12

Other individual comments:-

To hear update on new ideas put forward by the Government etc.

Opportunity to discuss matters with officers in an informal forum.

Information is changing all the time; it is nice to be updated by our own officers.

Course presenters are consistently good – however, there should be more online training.

## 3. If you answered 'could be improved' or 'poor' to question 1 please indicate in which areas improvements could be made.

Course content

1

Course presenters

0

Style of course

2

## 4. If you found it difficult to attend many of the learning and development courses in 2012/13 please indicate your reason(s) below:-

## Appendix 2

Work/family commitments	8
Already attended similar course	4
Unsuitable course timing	2
Unsuitable course content	2
Other individual comments:-	
• Health issues	

## Self-Assessment of Development Needs for 2013-14

5. What type of development opportunities do you think you would benefit from in the future?

## Skills Development

Chairing Committees and other meetings	8
Time Mgmt/Work/Life Balance	5
Dealing with the Media	9
Public Speaking	8
Questioning/Listening Skills	6
Meeting protocols and practices	11
Dealing with challenging situations/people	11

## Core Briefing Sessions

Corporate priorities and strategic direction	10
Budget process/financial management	7
Procurement	7
Performance management	5
Risk management	8
Freedom of Information/Data Protection Legislation	7

**Appendix 2**

Audit Committee/External Auditor	3
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Ethical standards and Code of Conduct	10
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**Key Topic Briefings**

Emergency Planning	8
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Housing and Homelessness	10
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Member Decision-making Structure and Processes	7
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Equalities and Diversity	2
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County Highways	15
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Children's/Youth Service Structure	8
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Community Safety/Anti-Social Behaviour	12
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Knowledge of major partnerships	10
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The Use of Social Media	5
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**6. What type of learning do you find most useful?**

Lecture with PowerPoint presentation	22
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Interactive training e.g. workshops/role play/case studies	12
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Learning from others, e.g. shadowing, mentoring	9
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Visiting other authorities to gain best practice	5
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External conferences	6
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Other individual comments:-

- Online training would be useful.

**Appendix 2****7. Additional individual comments**

- The Peer Review identified that although they commend the training given to Review Committee Member could and should be increased and improved.
- Greater attendance should be encouraged.
- Debate and interaction among Members at a training session improves relationships between Councillors.
- More use should be made of computer, with illustrations and examples.
- Training sessions that are poorly attended could be consolidated into one session, which would save time and money.
- A system of Parish/Town Council training should be of great benefit.
- As benefits and allowances have changed recently, it would be good if we could have another update on benefits.
- Partnership working with other public and private bodies and update of relevant legislation.