
MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2013/14 – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report contains the mid-programme review of the 2013/14 Member Learning and Development Programme.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Member training sessions are arranged in two phases each year – May to September (phase 1) and October to November (phase 2).
- 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. Two further mandatory planning-related course will be being offered in phase 2 of the Programme which, under the arrangements introduced this municipal year, 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 session.) The Members' Tour of the District is no longer part of the mandatory training programme.

3 TRAINING PROGRAMME TO DATE

- 3.1 The following courses were held in phase 1 of the Programme:-
- * Mandatory training for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees
 - Development (2 sessions)
 - Licensing
 - Appeals
 - * Induction/Refresher Courses for all Members
 - Standards and the Council's Code of Conduct
 - Probation Service
 - Treasury Management
 - County Highways
- 3.2 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 24 May that was designed specifically and mandatory for the two Members elected in May.
- 3.3 The training sessions have been provided through a combination of specialist training providers and Rochford District Council/Essex County Council officers. Wherever appropriate, Council officers have been used.

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- 3.4 All of the courses in the 2013/14 Programme will be held at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 3.5 The annual Members' tour of planning sites across the District took place on 21 September 2013.
- 3.6 The attendance by Rochford District Council Councillors at the training courses to date is appended.

Review Committee

- 3.7 A course was held for Review Committee Members on 29 May 2013 entitled 'Introduction to Scrutiny in Rochford', which was delivered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Officer. A further course for Review Committee Members was held on 16 July 2013, delivered by Tim Young, an independent scrutiny advisor, entitled 'Being an effective 'critical friend' and improving your questioning skills'.

4 FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 The following courses are scheduled to take place within the second part of the programme in October and November 2013:-

Courses for all Members of the Council:-

- Mandatory Development Committee
 - Emergency Planning
 - Chairmanship
 - Media
 - Individual Electoral Registration
- 4.2 The Chairmanship course will be delivered by an external training consultant; the other courses will be delivered by Rochford District Council officers.
- 4.3 The Council's Review Committee provides a strategic overview of the Council's use of Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) powers by way of reviewing the policy and considering statistical reports on usage. Every two years the Council provides RIPA training for senior officers and Members of the Review Committee. RIPA training was delivered to Review Committee Members and officers on 12 February 2013.
- 4.4 Due to the increased size of the Review Committee this year and the fact that the majority of Members were new to the Committee, Members requested that a further RIPA training course be held this year. A course has been arranged to take place on 31 January 2014 for Review Committee Members.

- 4.5 In addition to the opportunities provided by the learning and development programme, Members will be able to take advantage of two Budget Member Away Days on the budget on 30 November 2013 and 18 January 2014.

5 ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS

- 5.1 At its meeting on 11 April 2013 Members of the Standards Committee requested that statistics be provided to show how attendance at Member training sessions in 2012/13 compared with attendance in previous years.
- 5.2 Attendance by Rochford District Council Councillors at ‘Highly Recommended’ and ‘Recommended’ training courses over the past four years is summarised below and includes phase 1 of 2013/14.

Take-up of Member training courses					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 Phase 1
Highly Recommended courses	41%	42%	33%	49%	54%
Recommended courses	23%	27%	39%	41%	47%

- 5.3 It can be seen that, apart from 2011/12, there has been a steady increase in attendance at ‘Highly Recommended’ and ‘Recommended’ courses over the four-year period.
- 5.4 Possible reasons for the increase in attendance include the following:-
- Confirmatory emails are sent to Members who have booked to attend, just prior to a course, confirming the date and time of the course.
 - Reminder emails are sent prior to each course to those Members who have not booked, reminding them of the course and asking if they’d like to attend. Follow-up phone calls are made where appropriate.
 - There have been quite a few new Members elected who have been keen to attend training sessions.
 - Following feedback from Members that they prefer Council officers to deliver training, a greater use of officers has been made. This has been popular with Members as courses can be tailored specifically to Rochford District issues.

- A review of the dip in attendance in 2011/12 identifies that a combination of ill health and work/family commitments were factors.

6 CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development in October 2010. Charter status was awarded for three years and reassessment will take place in January 2014.
- 6.2 Arrangements for the reassessment by South East Employers are underway. Details of the re-accreditation process are provided in a separate report to this meeting.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of Member training is met from the Council's Member training budget, which is set at £3,500 for 2013/14. There is a separate budget for Review Committee training. The cost of Member Charter re-accreditation has been split between this year and last. Parish/Town Council attendees are charged if considered appropriate.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 On 20 June 2013 the Council's Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer delivered a day-time 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. The short film produced by the Council's Legal Team was shown at this training to illustrate issues around Member conduct and interests.
- 8.2 In response to requests from Parish/Town Council Clerks following the Standards/Code of Conduct Training on 20 June, a further training session was arranged for all Parish/Town Councils during the evening of 12 September.
- 8.3 The Head of Planning and Transportation delivered a planning course specifically for Parish/Town Councils in September 2013.

9 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to note the 2013/14 Mid-Programme Review.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None.

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MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2013/14 MID PROGRAMME REVIEW

Attendance Figures to Date

	Date	Title of Course	No. of Attendees
Mandatory Training Sessions (For Members of the relevant Committee)	9 May 2013	Development Committee	37
	24 May 2013	Introduction to Development Committee (for new Members)	2
	16 May 2013	Licensing Committee	20
	20 June 2013	Licensing Committee (Extra session)	2
	13 June 2013	Appeals Committee	10
	5 September 2013	Development Committee	37
Induction/ Refresher Courses for All Members	23 May 2013 (2 sessions)	Standards and the Council's Code of Conduct	24
	6 June 2013 (2 sessions)	Probation Service	16
	26 June 2013 (2 sessions)	Treasury Management	20
	11 July 2013 (2 sessions)	County Highways	21