
MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2011/12

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2011/12.

2 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS 2010/11

- 2.1 A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period 13 May 2010 to 17 March 2011 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Details of Parish/Town Council attendance are attached as Appendix 2.
- 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 2010 and January 2011 and a budget briefing forum in December 2010 to discuss the implications of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's budget for 2011/12.
- 2.4 During the year the Portfolio Holder for the Environment attended the Annual Environment Agency conference and the Portfolio Holder for Finance attended the Local Government Agency Conference.
- 2.5 The Review Committee has its own programme of training. Members of the Committee attended two courses in June; the first a Questioning Skills and Techniques course, the second a course entitled 'Successful Scrutiny – Work Programming and Scrutiny Reviews'. Both courses were delivered by Tim Young from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. In January 2011 the Review Committee attended training on the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) in its role of providing a strategic overview of the Council's use of the powers under RIPA in terms of reviewing policy and considering quarterly and annual statistical reports.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT – MARCH 2011

- 3.1 In accordance with usual practice, towards the end of the annual training programme, we sent to all Members a self-assessment questionnaire seeking feedback on the 2010/11 learning and development programme and details of any individual learning/development requests for 2011/12.
- 3.2 39 self-assessment questionnaires were circulated; 23 have been returned to date (a response rate of 59%); however, further forms are anticipated prior to the meeting. A summary of the responses from all the questionnaires received is to follow as Appendix 3. Key findings from the questionnaire responses received to date are:-
- The vast majority of respondents found the training sessions useful or very useful.

- Two respondents thought the sessions could be improved; the reason identified being course content.
- When asked what was most useful about the training, the majority of respondents answered ‘information obtained’, ‘the opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors’ and ‘ideas you could put into practice’. A comment was also received that a training session can provide Members with an initial introduction to a topic of interest.
- 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, with three comments that it was because of unsuitable course content.
- As far as learning styles are concerned, most respondents found a lecture style of training the most useful. Learning from others, e.g. shadowing/mentoring and interactive training, e.g. workshops/role playing/case studies attendance at external conferences/seminars are also valued by respondents.

4 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2010/11

- 4.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2011/12.
- 4.2 On 5 October 2010 the Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development. Charter status was awarded for three years and the Council is required to provide evidence of continuous improvement as part of the direction of travel in 18 months’ time and will be re-assessed in full against the Charter standard in three years.
- 4.3 The Charter logo has been added to all meeting Agendas and Member training documentation and has been placed on the Council’s website.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 A plan showing all dates for Member learning and development in the 2011/12 Municipal Year was provided to Members at the beginning of the calendar year. This plan included specific dates for mandatory training.
- 4.6 Provision has been made in the 2011/12 Council’s meetings timetable for training sessions to be arranged in two parts – mandatory and induction/refresher training in May/June/July, with mandatory/competency training in September/October/November (13 sessions identified in total).

The dates for mandatory training in 2011/12 are as follows:-

Part 1 - May to July 2011

Thursday 12/5/11	Mandatory Planning training
Thursday 19/5/11	Mandatory Licensing training
Thursday 9/6/11	Mandatory Appeals training

Part 2 - September to November 2010

Date to be advised	Tour of the District
Tuesday 4/10/11	Mandatory Planning training

- 4.7 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 2011/12 Municipal Year. The Guide provides information on the role of Councillor and includes the dates of mandatory training in the 2011/12 Municipal Year.
- 4.8 There will be circumstances where it is advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions. This can lead to:-
- better use of resources where the requirements of both groups coincide, such as skills training and understanding new legislation;
 - a spin off benefit to participants in understanding the constraints and requirements of Members and officers;
 - better working practices and relationships between officers and Members.
- 4.9 The Programme will reflect the decision of Council regarding mandatory training for Development, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members.
- 4.10 The Council has agreed that:-
- Failure to complete the May mandatory planning course will result in removal from the Development Committee with effect from June (on the basis that the Member concerned will be able to visit and speak (but not vote) at meetings unless appropriate dispensation has been given. Failure to complete the second two hours of planning training by the end of December will result in removal from the Development Committee with effect from January, again, unless appropriate dispensation has been given. Last year arrangements were made with the Council's Head of Planning and Transportation for tailored planning-related training for those Members granted dispensation by the Standards Committee from the scheduled planning training. The Standards Committee, at its meeting on 7 October 2010, agreed that the initial session of mandatory planning-related training each year should be of a fixed format, covering planning policy and planning legislation and, if possible, should be run by the Council's officers. It was felt that this would be of benefit to both

newly-elected Members and also to experienced Members as a 'refresher' as the law changes.

- Failure to complete the mandatory course for all Members of the Licensing Committee to be held on 19 May will result in removal from the Licensing Committee and the ability to sit on Licensing hearings, unless appropriate dispensation has been given.
- The Appeals Committee training course to be held on 9 June is mandatory for new Members of the Appeals Committee and all Members of the Committee who did not attend the mandatory training course held in July 2010. Failure to complete either of these sessions will result in removal from the Appeals Committee and the ability to sit on Appeals hearings unless appropriate dispensation has been given.

- 4.11 At the Standards Committee on 7 October 2010 it was agreed to introduce monitoring to ensure that attendees of mandatory training sessions are present at the training for the specified 2 hours by way of a signing out column added to the attendance signing sheet. This will be effected from May 2011.

Mandatory/Induction/Refresher Training – May to July 2011

- 4.12 Based on the above, the following Programme is proposed for the seven training slots identified from May to July 2011:-

May	Mandatory Planning training Ethical Framework Mandatory Licensing training
June/July	Mandatory Appeals training Corporate Priorities Local Government Finance/Final Accounts Dealing with Difficult Situations/People/ Public Speaking

- 4.13 The Review Committee has its own specific programme, which is developed in conjunction with the Chairman of the Review Committee. Dates have been allocated in the Council's meetings timetable specifically for Review Committee training.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 A 'post-course evaluation form' will be issued at the conclusion of each phase of training for completion by Members to evaluate the benefits from the training and how far they feel specific courses achieved their objectives. The

form is available in electronic format and, where possible, emailed to Members for completion and return by email.

- 4.16 Following requests by Members, it is intended that the majority of the training programme will be delivered by officers, supplemented by external trainers where appropriate.
- 4.17 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 may 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.
- 4.18 In line with budgetary considerations, where possible, all training courses will be held in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 4.19 At the Standards Committee on 7 October 2010 it was felt that attendance levels at training could be improved and that ways of promoting attendance at training sessions could be a subject for discussion.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of Member learning and development is met from the Member training budget, which is set at £8,800 for 2011/12.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is proposed to continue to offer Parish/Town Councils places on relevant courses.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To receive the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2009/10 as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5.
 - (2) To endorse the proposals for the Member Learning & Development Programme for 2010/11 as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.19.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None

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

Appendix 1

MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
ATTENDANCES MAY 2010 – MARCH 2011

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		#	*	+	3	3	4	2	6	5	4	1
C I Black					2	2	4	0	6	0	5	1
Mrs L A Butcher	&				2	2	4	0	6	0	5	1
P A Capon		#			2	2	4	1	6	0	5	0
Mrs T J Capon	&				2	2	4	0	6	0	5	0
M R Carter			*		3	3	4	2	6	1	4	1
J P Cottis		#	*		3	3	5	0	6	0	3	0
Mrs L M Cox		#	*		3	3	4	0	6	0	4	0
T G Cutmore	&		*		3	3	4	4	6	5	4	3
Mrs J Dillnutt			*		2	2	5	0	6	0	4	0
K A Gibbs		#	*	+	3	3	5	0	6	0	3	0
Mrs H L A Glynn		#		+	2	2	4	3	6	5	6	2
T E Goodwin			*		3	3	4	0	6	0	4	0
K J Gordon	&				2	2	4	1	6	0	5	1
J E Grey		#	*		2	2	4	2	6	1	5	1
M Hoy			*		3	3	4	3	6	4	4	2
K H Hudson	&		*		3	3	4	1	6	1	4	2
A J Humphries			*		3	0	4	0	6	0	4	0
T Livings			*	+	3	3	5	0	6	0	3	2

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 (including Area Committees)
***** – 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 & DEVELOPMENT
ATTENDANCES MAY 2010 – MARCH 2011

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Probity/Regulatory	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom		Optional	
					P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
Mrs G A Lucas-Gill		#	*	+	2	2	5	4	6	4	4	1
C J Lumley					2	2	4	2	6	0	5	0
Mrs J R Lumley		#		+	2	2	4	2	6	0	5	0
M Maddocks		#	*	+	3	3	4	3	6	5	4	2
J R F Mason			*		2	2	5	0	6	0	4	0
Mrs J E McPherson			*		2	2	5	5	6	4	4	1
D Merrick		#			2	2	4	4	6	4	5	3
Mrs J Mockford		#	*		2	2	5	5	6	6	4	2
R A Oatham			*		3	3	4	1	6	1	4	1
A C Priest					1	1	2	1	4	1	2	1
P R Robinson					2	2	4	0	6	0	5	0
C G Seagers	&				2	2	4	4	6	1	5	1
S P Smith ~		#			2	2	4	1	6	0	5	0
D G Stansby ~			*		2	2	5	1	6	1	4	0
M J Steptoe	&				2	2	4	2	6	4	5	1
J Thomass			*		2	2	5	0	6	0	4	0
Mrs M J Webster	&				2	2	4	4	6	2	5	2
P F A Webster				+	2	2	4	4	6	0	5	1
Mrs C A Weston		#	*		3	3	4	2	6	2	4	2
Mrs B J Wilkins			*		3	3	5	5	6	6	3	3

KEY

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PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL ATTENDANCE AT MEMBER TRAINING SESSIONS 2010/11

Parish/Town Councils were offered places on each of the following sessions. The actual number of attendees is shown in brackets:-

Part 1: May-July 2010

Mandatory Planning **(3)**

Role of the Audit Committee and the External Auditor **(0)**

Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct **(4)**

Climate Change/Natural Resources | Recycling/Waste Collection System **(4)**

Local Government Finance **(0)**

Part 2: October-November 2010

Mandatory Development Committee **(5)**

Influencing Decision-Making in your Local Area **(8)**

Leisure Team Briefings **(10)**

Part 3: February-March 2011

Speed Reading Skills **(1)**

Community Safety/Domestic Abuse **(5)**

Affordable Housing/Review of Changes to the Planning System **(14)**

Appendix 3

Member Development Self-Assessment – March 2011

Total sent out 39
Total returned 27
69 % return

1. In general, did you find the training sessions

Very useful	13
Useful	11
Could be improved	2
Poor	0

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

Information obtained	16
Ideas you could put into practice	8
Opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors	8

Other individual comments:-

 - Training would also instil an interest to then go and further that learning/own research.

3. If you answered 'could be improved' or 'poor' to question 2 please indicate in which areas improvements could be made.

Course content	2
Course presenters	1
Style of course	0

4. If you were not able to attend one or more training and development courses in 2010/11 please indicate the reason(s) why

Work/family commitments	11
Already attended similar courses	9
Unsuitable course timing	0

Appendix 3

Unsuitable course content 4

Other individual comments:-

- Civic commitments, both District and Parish
- Health issues.

Self-Assessment of Development Needs for 2010-11.

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

Skills Development

Chairmanship	5
Questioning skills	10
Media awareness	5
Public speaking	6
Time management	5
Speed reading	3
Dealing with difficult situations/people	10
IT	9

Core Briefing Sessions

Corporate priorities	8
Budget process/financial management	11
Procurement	5
Performance management	5
Risk management	5

Appendix 3

Key Topic Briefings

Local Development Framework	17
Affordable Housing and Planning	8
Member Decision-making Structure and Processes	5
Equalities and Diversity	3
County Highways	13
Children's/Youth Service Structure	6
Community Safety/Anti-Social Behaviour	5
Emergency Planning	6

6. What type of learning do you find most useful?

Lecture with PowerPoint presentation	19
Learning from others e.g. shadowing, mentoring	6
External conferences	2
Visiting other authorities to gain best practice	4
Interactive training, e.g. workshops/role playing/case studies	9

Other individual comments:-

- Lecture learning, but not necessarily with PowerPoint.
- I would like to see more remote learning opportunities. Tough for those with limited IT skills/Internet but not only cost effective for RDC but also would ensure training is available via all media.

Appendix 3

7. Additional individual comments

- I still consider the passing of knowledge of actual conditions and circumstances of our area by our own officers as extremely focussed and useful.
- Prefer courses presented and led by RDC officers.
- Lecture with PowerPoint and discussion to follow.
- To be kept up to date on the Localism Bill – especially in respect of the role of the Councillor.
- Can we include the Importance of Diversity Policy in the training?
- Members' allowances should be linked to attendance at training.