

MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2005/06 – MID PROGRAMME REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report contains the mid-programme review of the 2005/06 Member Training Programme.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 At the meeting of the Committee on 14 April 2005 the Training Programme for 2005/06 was agreed based on 3 strands of work:-

- Role development (covering priority areas such as leadership and decision-making skills and overview and scrutiny skills).
- Technical skills (covering how the Council works corporately and in specialist service areas).
- Personal skills (involving the skills needed to carry out a Member's role in the Council and in the community).

2.2 The detailed programme had been devised to be responsive to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Improvement Plan, the corporate priorities of the Council and the aspirations for the role of Councillor, as identified in the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Member Skills Framework.

3 TRAINING PROGRAMME TO DATE

3.1 By the date of the meeting the following courses will have been held:-

- Role development strand
 - Being an effective ward councillor
 - Chairmanship/questioning skills
 - Visionary leadership and effective decision-making
- Technical skills strand
 - Council's corporate priorities and budget
 - Local Development Framework
 - Licensing Moot
 - Member Visioning (2 sessions)
 - Homelessness Appeals
- Personal skills strand
 - Presenting a positive image of the Council (2 sessions)
 - IT skills (first session of 3)

3.2 The sessions have been provided through a combination of an IDeA consultant and IDeA Member Peer, specialist training providers and Council Officers.

3.3 The venues have either been at the Freight House, Rochford or the Civic Suite Rayleigh. In the summer months, unfortunately, problems were encountered with the heat at the Freight House and the lift installation works at the Civic Suite. The building works at the Civic Suite are now completed, and representations have been made to Holmes Place to install air conditioning at the Freight House. The IT training has taken place at the Castle Point and Rochford Adult Community College.

3.4 The attendance at the training courses to date is set out at Appendix 1.

4 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 The following courses are planned for the training programme for the remainder of this municipal year:-

- Role development
 - Overview & Scrutiny of Council services
 - Partnership and community engagement
 - Scrutiny of external bodies.
- Technical skills
 - E-government and customer services
 - Crime and Disorder legislation
 - Equalities
 - Waste Management
 - Planning
- Personal skills
 - IT skills (3 further sessions)

5 WORKING WITH OTHER COUNCILS

5.1 The Leaders of Rochford, Castle Point and Basildon Councils have held some discussions about suitable potential areas for joint working in the light of the 'Gershon' efficiency agenda in particular. In this context, Member training is one area where duplication may take place and where there might be learning, choice and cost benefits from working more closely together.

5.2 Already there has been some success around this with four Rochford Councillors attending a number of the Castle Point courses in the next few weeks. Similarly, Castle Point and Basildon Members may be interested in the future Rochford Member development and training programme.

5.3 It is envisaged that by the new year all three Councils may be able to produce a single document setting out any development opportunities that are available.

- 5.4 In the medium to longer term there are potential opportunities of working together to provide an improved range of courses tailored more to needs and cost sharing instead of duplication.

6 IDEA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOCUSED PROGRAMME

- 6.1 It has also been possible to offer Members the option of attending modules from the IDeA Leadership Academy.
- 6.2 One Councillor has attended a 2-day course on 'Resource Management and the Efficiency Agenda', which was found to be very useful and enlightening. Three Councillors have expressed an interest in the course 'Planning as a Strategic Tool' and we are waiting for details of some extra dates from the IDeA as the course originally advertised is fully subscribed.

7 OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- 7.1 Training opportunities are also provided by other organisations, such as the Institute of Local Government Studies at Birmingham and the East of England Regional Assembly.
- 7.2 There could be merit in Members attending some of these courses as, aside from course content, they give the opportunity to undertake training with Members from a variety of other authorities and the chance to exchange experiences and knowledge.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the following criteria be adopted when determining whether to offer these course to Members:-
- Course content relevant to the aims of the Member training programme and the Council's corporate priorities.
 - The reputation of the training provider in offering effective programmes.
 - Course content relevant to the role of the Member concerned.
 - Funding available in budget.
 - The Member attending the course being asked to provide a resume of information gleaned for the Members' Bulletin.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The bid to the office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Capacity Building Programme has been successful, and £36,000 per annum for 2005/06 and 2006/07 has been awarded for the Member Training and Development Programme.
- 8.2 This enables the full programme to be implemented and also the opportunity of attending other external training as set out in paragraph 7.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to agree to external training opportunities being offered to Members as set out in paragraph 7.

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Background Papers:-

None

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