

MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014/15 – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report contains the mid-programme review of the 2014/15 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 courses will be being offered in phase 2 of the Programme, 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 session). The Members' Tour of the District, which is scheduled to be held on Saturday 11 October, 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:-
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| * | Mandatory training for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees | - | Development (2 sessions) |
| | | - | Licensing |
| | | - | Appeals |
| * | Induction/Refresher Courses for all Members | - | Corporate Priorities |
| | | - | Standards and the Council's Code of Conduct |
| | | - | Audit Committee |
| | | - | Chairmanship |
- 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 27 May that was designed specifically and mandatory for the Members newly elected in May.
- 3.3 The Treasury Management training course, which was cancelled on 17 July, has been rescheduled and will now take place on 11 October.

- 3.4 The training sessions have been provided through a combination of specialist training providers and Rochford District Council officers. Wherever appropriate, Council officers have been used.
- 3.5 All of the courses in the 2014/15 Programme will be held at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 3.6 The annual Members' tour of planning sites across the District is scheduled to take place on 11 October 2014.
- 3.7 The attendance by Rochford District Council Councillors at the training courses to date is appended.

Review Committee

- 3.8 A course was held for Review Committee Members on 4 June 2014 entitled 'Developing an effective work programme', which was delivered by Tim Young, an independent scrutiny advisor. A further course for Review Committee Members has been arranged for 13 November.

4 FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 The following courses are scheduled to take place within the second part of the programme in October and November 2014:-

Courses for all Members of the Council:-

- Budget/Council tax
- Treasury Management
- Performance and Risk Management
- Mandatory Development Committee
- Safeguarding

There is a further mandatory planning course scheduled to be held on 12 February 2015.

- 4.2 The Treasury Management course will be delivered by an external training consultant; the Safeguarding course will be delivered by the independent Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Board. All 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 treasury management function. It is therefore highly recommended that Review Committee Members attend the Treasury Management course on 16 October.

- 4.4 In addition to the opportunities provided by the learning and development programme, Members will be able to take advantage of two Budget Member Awaysdays.
- 4.5 Council on 15 April 2014 considered the report of the Standards Committee on the way forward for Member development in light of the recent Charter assessment recommendations. It was resolved that arrangements for Member development are kept as they are currently and that the Standards Committee retains responsibility for Member training. In accordance with the resolution that a representative from each political group is involved at meetings when the training programme is considered, there is now a Member from each political group on the Standards Committee.
- 4.6 It was further resolved by Council that the Standards Committee should explore how the training programme may be tailored more specifically for individual Members' training needs. Members of the Committee are asked to consider how this can be achieved. The proposed developments in e-learning opportunities for Members may be considered in this regard.
- 4.7 One suggestion could be to advise Members that funding may be available for Members to attend certain externally run conferences/training courses; these would have to be considered in terms of budget capacity. Any request could be considered by officers in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee.
- 4.8 A Councillor on the Licensing Committee felt that it would be useful for Licensing Committee Members to attend an outdoor music event at a nearby authority to broaden their knowledge and understanding of such events in terms of licensing issues/requirements. The Licensing officer advises that there may be an opportunity to visit Southend Borough next year when outdoor events are likely to take place. This is an option that Members can consider.

5 E-LEARNING

- 5.1 Progress is being made on developing a Members' e-learning zone within the Council's e-learning platform. In time this will include a course section and an information area to which Members can go for any relevant information relating to them.
- 5.2 When the Member area on the e-learning platform has been fully established and Member details added, Members will be provided with username and password details and full instructions on how to access the learning. Human Resources is currently liaising with Member Services in this respect and Members will be notified via email when the courses are available and sent a link to access the training.
- 5.3 The first course (which all staff have now completed) will be an Equality & Diversity module. It is thought that Members would find this course useful.

- 5.4 As well as the standard range of e-learning courses that HR is creating in partnership with Vine HR, there is the potential for designing ‘bespoke’ courses using the specialist software available to HR. Ideally, these would be courses that have been developed by one of the other councils within the Vine HR Partnership, which can be adapted to the needs of Rochford District Council Members. This is something that can be worked on in future.

6 CHARGING OTHER AUTHORITIES FOR TRAINING

- 6.1 As part of the 2014 Member Services Service Review Actions and Savings Plan the option of charging neighbouring Authorities for places on our Member Learning and Development programme was raised. It was felt that there is potential for raising income in the region of approximately £120 per annum based on the Parish charge rate. This would be possible for a few courses (perhaps 2-3 per annum) as most are run by RDC officers and are Rochford specific. It was requested that this be brought for consideration to the Standards Committee.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of Member training is met from the Council’s Member training budget, which is set at £7,000 for 2014/15, an increase from the £5,000 budget for 2013/14. There is a separate budget for Review Committee training. Parish/Town Council attendees are charged if considered appropriate.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As agreed at the last Standards Committee meeting, Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct training was offered to Parish/Town Councils in Part 1 of the 2014/15 programme at no cost. On 9 July 2014 the Council’s Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer delivered a day-time training course for Parish/Town Councils at the Civic Suite. This was run as a ‘pub quiz style’ course, which proved to be very popular with attendees. All Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks were invited to attend the session, which covered the Code of Conduct, Members’ interests, bias and pre-determination, gifts and hospitality, social media and complaints and sanctions. There were 19 attendees.
- 8.2 The Head of Planning and Transportation ran a Planning training course specifically designed for Parish/Town Councils on 1 September at a cost of £40 per head. There were 9 attendees. There may be the opportunity in November for running an ‘Introduction to Planning’ course for Parish/Town Councils, again at a rate of £40 per delegate.
- 8.3 As part of phase 1 of the Member training programme Parish/Town Councils were offered places on the Chairmanship training course held on 22 July at a cost of £40 per head. This was provided by an external trainer. Three Rayleigh Town Councillors attended this training.

- 8.4 At the Parish summit on 31 July there was a request for information regarding training for Parish and Town Councils. Subsequently information regarding a course run by EALC at their Dunmow offices on 9 December from 10 am to 1 pm, which will cover EROB (Exclusive Rights of Burial), has been sent to Parish and Town Council Clerks. This is a half day course and will be delivered by David McCarthy from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management at a cost of £45 per delegate.
- 8.5 The Parish Summit also requested that training options for Parish/Town Councils be investigated. The EALC has advised that the courses it runs for its Members at their Dunmow offices are generally £45 for a half-day per delegate. There is no differentiation in terms of cost payable for smaller/larger Parish Councils.

9 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) To consider whether an element of funding should be set aside for individual Members to be able to request attendance at conferences/training courses considered of value in terms of training need and any other possibilities in addition to greater use of e-learning that could be introduced in this regard.
- (2) To consider setting a charge of £40 per person to neighbouring Authorities for places on the Rochford Member Learning and Development programme.
- (3) To endorse the attendance of Licensing Committee Members at an outdoor event licensed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council with a view to broadening knowledge of such events in terms of licensing issues/requirements.
- (4) To note the 2014/15 Mid-Programme Review and progress with regard to e-learning.



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Background Papers:-

None.

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MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2014/15

MID PROGRAMME REVIEW

Attendance Figures to Date

	Date	Title of Course	No. of Attendees
Mandatory Training Sessions (For Members of the relevant Committee)	29 May 2014	Development Committee	31
	27 May 2014	Introduction to Development Committee (for new Members)	6
	12 June 2014	Licensing Committee	16
	23 June 2014	Licensing Committee (Extra session)	3
	19 June 2014	Appeals Committee	10
	11 September 2014	Development Committee	34
Induction/ Refresher Courses for All Members	17 June 2014 (2 sessions)	Corporate Priorities	16
	25 June 2014 (2 sessions)	Standards and the Council's Code of Conduct	21
	10 July 2014 (2 sessions)	Audit Committee	12
	22 July 2014 (2 sessions)	Chairmanship	14