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## MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2016/17

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2016/17.

### 2 MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS 2015/16

- 2.1 A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period May 2015 to February 2016 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Mandatory training took place for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees. All Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees fulfilled the mandatory training requirement for the Municipal Year.
- 2.3 Three sessions of mandatory planning training took place in 2015/16. Currently, all Members of the Development Committee have completed the required mandatory training. A requirement that Members must not miss two consecutive training sessions applies also to Members who wish to substitute at Development Committee meetings.
- 2.4 In addition to the scheduled mandatory planning training session there was a short training update prior to the January Development Committee meeting, which was delivered by the Assistant Director, Planning and Planning team leaders. Thirteen Members attended: feedback from Members was that there was insufficient time allowed for the session and that the layout of the room meant that there was insufficient room to accommodate all attendees.
- 2.5 A training update arranged to take place prior to the Development Committee on 21 April will now not be held.
- 2.6 Feedback on the mandatory development training session on 11 February included comments that some aspects of the training did not focus sufficiently on the Member decision-making process in respect of planning applications and was not relevant to the current work of the Committee. There was also comment that there should continue to be afternoon and evening sessions for training, as agreed by the Standards Committee, as it was difficult for some Members to attend training when only one session was offered. It has been agreed that scheduled mandatory planning training in 2016/17 will be held at 1.30 pm and 7.30 pm in the usual way.
- 2.7 A mandatory planning training course was organised for all newly elected Members in May 2015.
- 2.8 In 2015/16 an external trainer was used for the Code of Conduct/Ethical Framework training for both District and Parish/Town Council Members.

- 2.9 In addition to the opportunities provided by the Member learning and development programme, Members were able to take advantage of two Member Budget Away Days in October 2015 and January 2016. The annual Member tour of planning sites in the District took place in October 2015.
- 2.10 The Review Committee has its own programme of training. Members of the Committee attended two courses in 2015/16. The first was an Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny at Rochford, run by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny officer. The second course, Overview & Scrutiny – 'Being an effective 'critical friend' - improving your preparation and questioning skills', was run by Tim Young, an Associate Member from the Centre of Public Scrutiny.
- 2.11 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. A training course took place on 29 January 2016 and the next course will be arranged in 2017/18.
- 2.12 Council on 21 October 2014 resolved that Members could apply for funding for attendance at external conferences/training courses but that the allocation of such funding be subject to the agreement of all Group Leaders. One Member took this up for a number of appropriate courses.
- 2.13 Safeguarding training was arranged for Members in August 2015.
- 2.14 During the course of the year there were presentations in the Council Chamber by partner organisations, including Essex Police, London Southend Airport and Essex County Council Public Health. These were well attended and can be considered as part of the continuing Member development programme.
- 2.15 In consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Community and Governance, in November Universal Credit training was arranged for Members and officers as well as partner organisations, such as Rochford Housing Association, Job Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Town/Parish Councils.

### **3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 In accordance with usual practice, at the end of the annual training programme, Members were asked to provide feedback on the 2015/16 learning and development programme and details of any individual learning and development requests they may have for 2016/17.
- 3.2 Responses in respect of the 2015/16 programme included positive comments that the training was informative and well planned and that it was useful to have the presentation slides circulated to all Members.

- 3.3 A newly elected Member has provided feedback on the training for new Members in 2015/16, both in terms of course content and style/effectiveness of presentations. It was felt that there needed to be an overview of the common issues that Councillors have to deal with and that the use of a variety of delivery methods to present training would provide greater interaction between officers and Members.
- 3.4 In respect of 2016/17, the following Member suggestions for training were received:
- E-learning/webinars would be a useful addition to classroom-based training
  - Mentoring would be useful, particularly for newly elected Members
  - The option of morning sessions would be useful
  - Courses on Social Media, Revenues and Benefits, Public speaking/Questioning Skills, Children/Youth Service, Constitution and Rules of Debate would be useful
  - A project management course (in light of the work of the Investment Board), delivered by external training providers, should be offered.

#### **4 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2016/17**

- 4.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2016/17.
- 4.2 The Programme needs to be responsive to the corporate priorities of the Council, as well as the individual training needs of Members.
- 4.3 In accordance with agreed practice, a plan showing all dates for Member learning and development in the 2016/17 Municipal Year was provided to Members following agreement of the Timetable of meetings by the Executive. This plan included specific dates for mandatory training.
- 4.4 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 2016/17 Municipal Year and will be available on the Council's website and in hard copy as appropriate (attached as Appendix 2). The Guide provides information on the role of the Councillor and includes the dates of mandatory training in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.
- 4.5 Council on 21 October 2014 resolved that a charge be set of £45 per attendee for neighbouring authorities for places on certain courses in the RDC training programme. Relevant courses in the 2016/17 Municipal Year will be identified and offered to neighbouring authorities accordingly.
- 4.6 Induction/ Mandatory/ Refresher Training – May to September 2016
- 4.7 There would be benefits to two sessions of induction training being organised

for newly elected Members during the week commencing 9 May; the training to be delivered by RDC Directors/Assistant Directors. A key element would be for new Members to meet key officers at an early stage. It would be useful for this training to include Local Government processes, Member protocols, the role of a District Councillor and how the Council works.

- 4.8 The following Programme is proposed at this stage for the training slots identified from May to September 2016:-

May	Mandatory Planning training
June	Mandatory Licensing training Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct Mandatory Appeals training Business Continuity
July	Audit Committee County Highways – Local Highways Panel Chairmanship

- 4.9 The Review Committee has its own programme: a date has been allocated in the Council's meetings timetable specifically for Review Committee training.
- 4.10 Where possible, the training programme will be delivered by officers, supplemented by external trainers where appropriate. For 2016/17 external trainers will be used for mandatory Licensing Committee training and Chairmanship training. Where possible, all training courses will be held in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- 4.11 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. 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. Essex County Highways have indicated that they would like to deliver two 1.5 hour sessions – one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

## **5 JOINT MEMBER/OFFICER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

- 5.1 A Member suggestion has been received that the principle be established that, where appropriate, senior officers be invited to join Members in attending certain training sessions. In particular, this may be helpful where specific training has been requested in the course of a senior officer's appraisal. There may be benefits to be achieved in terms of convenience and also a better use of resources.

**6 MANDATORY PLANNING TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 6.1 On 19 May (prior to the first Development Committee meeting) a planning training session will be held at 1.30 pm, repeated at 7.30 pm, in the usual way. Attendance at one of these sessions will be mandatory for all Members of the Committee and potential substitutes. There are three additional mandatory planning training courses scheduled to take place during the year. Each of these courses will be held at 1.30 pm and repeated at 7.30 pm. The current requirement is that should a Member/Substitute Member of the Development Committee 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.
- 6.2 The Member tour of planning sites will be scheduled for the autumn.

**7 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING**

- 7.1 At full Council on 28 July 2015 it was resolved that one place on appropriate District Council training courses be offered free of charge to each Parish/Town Councils and that additional places incur a charge of £40 per attendee.
- 7.2 In Part One of the 2015/16 training programme the District Council arranged for a Standards training course for Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks to be held on Wednesday 22 July. In addition, Parish/Town Council Members/ Clerks were invited to attend the Health and Wellbeing course and the Business Development courses at no cost.
- 7.3 In Part Two of the Programme three courses were offered to Parish/Town Councils: Media/Social Media, Southend Airport and Housing and Homelessness. Southend Airport training was offered free of charge to Parish Councils. The usual amount of £40 was applied to the Media and Housing training for any places additional to the first free place.
- 7.4 In addition, Parish/Town Councils were invited to attend a Safeguarding course, which was delivered by the Essex Safeguarding Children and Adults Board. Representatives from Ashingdon, Barling, Rawreth, Stambridge and Hullbridge Parish Councils and Rayleigh Town Council attended.

**Parish/Town Council Planning Training Sessions**

- 7.5 At Full Council on 28 July 2015 it was resolved that the District Council provides a planning training course each year to Parish/Town Council in the District. This course is to be designed specifically for Parish/Town Councils be made available to one representative from each Parish/Town Council free of charge, but chargeable for further delegates.
- 7.6 The Assistant Director – Planning Services delivered the planning training session to Parish/Town Councils on 9 March. The training provided a basic guide to making planning decisions and information on planning policy and

enforcement, both in general terms and relating specifically to Rochford. Of the 14 Parishes in the District, there were only 4 attendees at the training. It is suggested that it may be practicable for a minimum number of attendees to be established in respect of future planning sessions organised for Parish/Town Councils so that the training is worthwhile/cost effective.

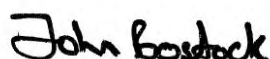
## 8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The cost of Member learning and development is met from the Member training budget, which is set at £6,500 for 2016/17. Parish/Town Council attendees and attendees from other local authorities are charged as appropriate.

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- (1) To receive the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2015/16 as set out in paragraph 2.1.
- (2) To endorse the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2016/17 as set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.10.
- (3) That it be agreed in principle that, where appropriate, senior officers be invited to join Members in attending certain training sessions where this training has been requested in the course of a staff appraisal.
- (4) That a minimum number of attendees be established for planning training sessions organised for Parish/Town Councils.



John Bostock

Assistant Director – Democratic Services

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### Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power, Committee Administrator on:-

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

## MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY 2015 – FEBRUARY 2016

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom/ Optional	
				P	A	P	A	P	A
C I Black				3	3	6	0	4	0
J C Burton				1	0	6	0	6	2
Mrs L A Butcher		#	+	1	1	7	3	5	0
M R Carter		#		4	4	6	0	4	0
T G Cutmore	E	#		3	2	6	2	4	1
R R Dray		#	+	1	1	7	5	5	4
J H Gibson		#	+	1	1	6	2	6	0
Mrs H L A Glynn ~				2	1	6	1	6	3
K J Gordon				1	1	6	0	6	0
J D Griffin			+	1	1	6	2	6	0
Mrs A V Hale				1	1	7	0	5	1
J Hayter			+	3	3	6	4	6	3
B T Hazlewood		#	+	3	2	6	4	6	3
N J Hookway				2	2	7	2	5	1
Mrs D Hoy				2	2	6	0	6	3
M Hoy			+	2	2	6	0	6	3
K H Hudson	E	#		3	3	6	1	6	1
G J Ioannou			+	4	4	6	2	6	3
J L Lawmon ~			+	2	2	7	3	5	1

**KEY**

- P** – total number of attendances possible  
**A** – actual number of sessions attended  
**~** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council  
**E** – Executive Member  
**#** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee  
**+** – Members of the Review Committee

## MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY 2015 – FEBRUARY 2016

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom	
				P	A	P	A	P	A
Mrs J R Lumley	E			1	1	6	1	6	4
M Maddocks				1	1	6	2	6	3
Mrs C M Mason			+	3	3	6	0	4	0
J R F Mason		#	+	3	3	7	0	3	0
Mrs J E McPherson	E			2	1	6	1	6	3
D Merrick		#		4	4	7	7	3	3
R A Oatham				2	2	6	0	6	2
Mrs C A Pavelin			+	2	2	6	5	7	5
Mrs C E Roe	E			1	1	6	1	6	4
C G Seagers		#		3	3	6	1	4	2
S P Smith	E			3	2	6	1	4	1
Mrs M H Spencer			+	1	1	7	2	5	2
D J Sperring		#	+	2	2	7	7	5	4
M J Steptoe	E	#		3	3	6	3	4	2
I H Ward	E			4	4	6	5	4	3
M Webb			+	3	2	6	2	6	2
Mrs C A Weston		#		2	2	6	4	6	3
Mrs B J Wilkins				3	3	6	5	6	5

**KEY**

- P – total number of attendances possible
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- # – Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee
- +



# Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council



## Introduction

Each Rochford District Councillor is elected for a four-year term to represent and be the voice of their community.

Rochford is a District located in southeast Essex. It is bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the urban areas of Southend and Castle Point to the south. The District has three main towns, Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. Much of the remaining area is green belt with a large area around Foulness under Ministry of Defence control. London Southend Airport straddles the District's southern boundary with Southend.

The District holds a special place in the hearts of its residents. There is a great deal of pride among the people who live here and this is matched by the Council, which puts its residents at the heart of everything it does. Rochford is currently the third best authority in the country for recycling, with its residents recycling just over 65% of their waste.

The Council organises and facilitates various Sports and Arts events and activities throughout the year, such as Wild Woods Day, which regularly attracts more than 3,000 people to Hockley Woods.

The Council's Community Safety Team works in partnership with Police and other members of the statutory Castle Point and Rochford District Community Safety Partnership to identify and implement effective ways of addressing and reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and crime and disorder to ensure the District remains one of the safest places to live in the county.

By standing as a candidate in the District Council elections and, if elected, as a District Councillor, you have an opportunity to contribute to the work and priorities of Rochford District Council. The Council holds the Charter for Elected Member Development and provides a comprehensive induction programme and demonstrates a top political and managerial commitment to the development of its Members.

This guide aims to explain a little of the work of a Councillor and how Rochford District Council operates. It is intended to provide candidates with a useful starting point as to the nature of the commitment they would be taking on.

## What is Rochford District Council and how does it relate to other Councils in Essex?

Across the country there are Local Councils (referred to as either Town or Parish Councils) and Principal Councils (referred to as either County, District or Borough Councils). Principal Councils can be either unitary or two-tier. Rochford is one of 12 District Councils in a two-tier structure with Essex County Council. Under this structure, management of local authority services is divided between Rochford District Council and Essex County Council. Unitary councils, such as Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, manage all local authority services in their area.

The principal responsibilities of District and County Councils are set out below:-

DISTRICT COUNCIL	COUNTY COUNCIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting Council Tax</li> <li>• Strategic Housing</li> <li>• Planning, Local Development Framework and Development Control</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Leisure and Tourism</li> <li>• Building Regulations</li> <li>• Cemeteries &amp; Cremation</li> <li>• Parks and Open Spaces</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Local Land Charges</li> <li>• Waste and Recycling Collection</li> <li>• Elections and Electoral Registration</li> <li>• Benefits</li> <li>• Licensing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Children's Services</li> <li>• Adult Social Care</li> <li>• Strategic Planning including structure plan and minerals planning</li> <li>• Highways, including lighting, traffic and transport planning</li> <li>• Refuse Disposal</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Consumer Protection</li> <li>• Public Rights of Way</li> <li>• Strategic Emergency Planning (i.e. major incidents or disasters such as oil spills, avian influenza etc.)</li> </ul>

Although Rochford District Council is an independently-elected Council with its own separate responsibilities, it works closely with its partners to provide high quality services for residents. The Council also works closely with the voluntary and business sectors and key interest groups to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District.

Rochford District is entirely covered by 14 Town and Parish Councils. These vary considerably in terms of size (both acreage and population) and responsibilities. Their responsibilities include: allotments, maintenance of closed churchyards, aspects of the environment (including litter control, maintenance of roadside verges), social and recreational facilities (including parish and community halls), playing fields, parks and open spaces, public amenities (including some street lighting), public shelters, bus shelters, public clocks and public seats.

## Governance and Decision Making

### **The Constitution**

Rochford District Council has a Constitution that sets out how the Council works. The Constitution is approved by Full Council and includes information on the roles, functions and responsibilities of Councillors and key officers. It contains information on how decisions are made and provides detailed guidance about rules and procedures.

### **The Council**

The Council comprises 39 Councillors representing 13 Wards. All Councillors meet together regularly to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget for each year. The Council appoints the Leader of the Council and various Committees. The Leader appoints other Councillors, each with a specific portfolio of responsibility, who, together with the Leader, make up the Executive. The Council appoints a Review Committee, which is concerned with overview and scrutiny of the actions of the Executive.

### **The Executive**

The Executive make decisions, either collectively or individually, on matters relating to their specific areas of responsibility, on matters of policy across the range of services delivered by the Council (subject to some decisions that are reserved for all Councillors meeting as 'full Council'). The more significant decisions (known as 'key decisions') are published in a Key Decisions Document. Decisions made by the Executive, or by individual Portfolio Holders, are published and are subject to 'call-in' by the Council's Review Committee.

## Governance and Decision Making continued

### The Council's Committees/Forums:-

**Appeals Committee:** exercises functions in relation to appeals, licensing and registration.

**Audit Committee:** involved in matters of internal audit, governance and risk management arrangements and consideration of matters referred to it by the External Auditor, including the management of the budget in respect of these functions.

**Development Committee:** exercises the Council's functions in relation to the granting of planning permissions, dangerous, neglected or derelict premises and building control regulation.

In the interest of natural justice and each Councillor's duty to the whole community, Councillors must not speak or vote for or against a particular planning application without having heard all relevant details in respect of the case. This ensures that planning decisions will be made on the basis of information and arguments available to the Committee.

**Licensing Committee:** exercises functions under the Licensing Act 2003, the Gambling Act 2005 and associated legislation.

**Review Committee:** The Overview and Scrutiny function at Rochford District Council is carried out by the Council's Review Committee. The Review Committee supports the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. It allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by reviewing areas that have been suggested or are causing concern about the operation of the Council, and that of its partners. It can also scrutinise decisions made by the Council's Executive to ensure that best practice and best value is provided at all times for the benefit of Council Tax payers, and develop recommendations relating to Council policy and activity.

**Standards Committee:** the Standards Committee exercises functions in relation to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members and determines the annual Member Learning and Development Programme.

## Councillors and their work

### The role of the Councillor

Councillors either represent political parties or are independent. Their common interest is to see the community improve and develop a better quality of life for local residents. Councillors play a vital role in shaping and directing the effectiveness of local services for the benefit of local people. Councillors are elected by the community to represent the interests of local people.

Work normally includes:-

- attending Council and Committee meetings to make or help shape decisions on local services;
- representing the Council on other organisations;
- helping the Council to achieve its corporate aims;
- championing the needs of local people and local communities;
- taking up issues on behalf of constituents;
- attending relevant training courses.

Being a Councillor requires you to care about your local community, be willing to give up some of your time and be keen to learn.

### Standards of Conduct

Councillors must be scrupulous in observing the rules on expenses and allowances, and are required to declare pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with a Code of Conduct for Members.

### Facilities available to a Councillor

A range of facilities is provided for Councillors to assist them in undertaking their role. At the Civic Suite, Rayleigh there is a Members' lounge, a library and an office. Councillors are issued with an iPad on which they can access documentation relating to meetings and their work as a Councillor. An induction programme is available to new Councillors along with a range of mandatory and optional learning and development opportunities open to all Councillors throughout their term of office. All dates can be accessed by contacting Member Services or referring to the Council's meetings timetable. Mandatory and induction training dates are listed over the page.

## **Councillors and their work continued**

### **The mandatory training dates for 2016/17 are:-**

Planning training: Thursday 19/5/16  
Appeals Committee training: Thursday 9/6/16  
Licensing Committee training: Thursday 16/6/16  
Planning training: Thursday 8/9/16

If Members are not able to attend the mandatory training there may be restrictions on them taking part in decision-making in the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees.

**In addition to the above mandatory training dates, there will be induction training for new Members in May to July 2016.**

**Induction training for Members of the Review Committee takes place on:-**

Wednesday 2/6/16

## **Are there any payments or allowances for Councillors?**

Councillors are not paid in the sense that they do not receive a salary for being a Councillor. However, allowances are paid, which fall into two main categories:-

- basic and special responsibility allowances and
- travelling and subsistence allowances.

An annual basic allowance is paid to each Councillor in 12 monthly instalments. This basic allowance is intended to recognise the time devoted by Councillors to their work, including such inevitable calls on their time as Council meetings and meetings with constituents, and also to cover incidental costs (such as the use of their homes and private telephones) for which other provision is not made.

A special responsibility allowance is paid to certain designated post holders (such as the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Portfolio Holders and Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen).

A travelling allowance is also payable to recognise the reasonable travel expenses incurred by Councillors in the course of their attendance at Council meetings.

Childcare and Dependant Carer's allowances are also available.



## Who may stand for election to the Council?

To qualify as a candidate you must satisfy the following criteria on nomination day and polling day:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union.

A candidate must also meet at least one of the following four qualifications on nomination day and polling day:

- Be registered as a local government elector for the Council (this applies also throughout their term of office); or
- Occupier of, as an owner or tenant, land or premises in the Council's area during the last 12 months; or
- Their main or only place of work has been in the Council's area during the last 12 months; or
- Have lived in the Council's area for the last 12 months.

## Who may not stand for election to the Council?

A person is disqualified from being a member of or a candidate for a local authority on various grounds, which include holding a paid office or employment under the Council, being subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order, composition or arrangement with creditors or having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (during the five years before election day). Once elected, a Councillor would be disqualified for these reasons and for failure to attend a meeting throughout a period of six consecutive months (unless such failure was due to some reason approved by the Council before the expiry of that period).