MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2017/18

1   SUMMARY

1.1   Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2017/18.

2   MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS 2016/17

2.1   A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period May to November 2016 is appended.

2.2   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 2016/17. 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   A mandatory planning training course was organised for all newly elected Members in 2016. Such a course will not be held in 2017/18 as there are no District Council elections in May.

2.5   In 2016/17 an external trainer was used for the Code of Conduct/Ethical Framework training for both District and Parish/Town Council Members.

2.6   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 2016 and January 2017. A Member tour of planning sites in the District took place in October 2016.

2.7   The Review Committee has its own programme of training. Members of the Committee attended three courses in 2016/17. The first was an Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny at Rochford, run by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny officer. The second course, 'Making Effective Use of Overview and Scrutiny' and the third course, 'Assessing Evidence, Drawing Conclusions and Drafting Effective Recommendations' were run by Tim Young, an Associate Member of the Centre of Public Scrutiny.

2.8   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.

2.9   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. Two Members took this up for appropriate courses during the year, some of which were at no cost to the Council.

2.10   During the course of the year there were presentations in the Council Chamber by partner organisations, including the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner and Essex Highways. These were open to District and Parish/Town Council Members and were well attended. These can be considered as part of the continuing Member development programme.

2.11   A briefing session on the results of the Rochford District Council Staff Survey was held on 22 February.

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 2016/17 Learning and Development programme and details of any individual learning and development requests they may have for 2017/18.

3.2   A total of 14 assessment forms were received and the majority of the respondees found the training sessions in the 2016/17 programme to be very useful. There was one rating of 'poor', and two respondees felt that the training 'could be improved'.

3.3   In respect of 2017/18, the following Member comments for training were received:

- Planning training needs to be improved so that it is fit for purpose

- Training should be more closely organised by Members via the Standards Committee

- Course content should be tailored to Members' requirements

- Licensing training was excellent (interactive) but other training could be static 'chalk and talk'

3.4   In accordance with a request from the Standards Committee, Members were asked in the self-assessment form to indicate if they had a preference as to the time of day that training courses are held, i.e. morning/afternoon/evening: responses are detailed in paragraph 4.13 below.

4   LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017/18

4.1   Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2017/18.

4.2   The Programme needs to be responsive to the Council's Business Plan, as well as to 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 2017/18 Municipal Year was provided to Members following agreement of the Timetable of Meetings in March. This plan included specific dates for mandatory training.

<u>Induction/ Mandatory/ Refresher Training – May to September 2017</u>

4.4　As there will be no District Council elections in May, there will be no specific induction training sessions for newly elected Members.

4.5　The following Programme is proposed at this stage for the training slots identified from May to September 2017:

May　　　　　Mandatory Planning

June　　　　Mandatory Licensing
　　　　　　Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct
　　　　　　Mandatory Appeals
　　　　　　Food/Health and Safety Plans

July　　　　Audit Committee
　　　　　　Treasury Management
　　　　　　Dementia Friends

September　Mandatory Planning

4.6　The Review Committee has its own programme: a date has been allocated in the meetings timetable specifically for Review Committee training.

4.7　The training programme will be delivered by Council officers or external trainers, as appropriate. For 2017/18 external trainers will be used for mandatory Planning training, mandatory Licensing Committee training and Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct training. Where possible, all training courses will be held in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.

4.8　Mandatory Licensing Committee training in 2016/17 was delivered by Paul West from 21st Century Licensing, consultants who specialise in alcohol licence applications but operate in other areas of Licensing. The training covered aspects of Licensing Law, but also included a mock hearing in the Council Chamber. Positive feedback from Members following the 2016/17 training with Paul West indicated that they enjoyed the interactive nature of the course. The trainer has been approached to deliver the course again in 2017/18.

Mandatory Planning Training Arrangements

4.9　On 18 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.

4.10   In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, the Assistant Director, Planning & Regeneration Services has organised training to be delivered that will cover elements of Planning Policy and the decision making process at Development Committee with a key emphasis on conservation matters, archaeology and urban design. The training will be delivered by Essex Conservation and Urban Design Team and supported by Rochford officers.

4.11   There are two additional mandatory planning training courses scheduled to take place during the year.

4.12   The Member tour of planning sites will be scheduled for the autumn.

4.13   The following responses were received from 13 Members regarding the time of day they would prefer courses to be run (see paragraph 3.4 above). The Committee is asked to consider whether it would like to amend the course timings on the basis of these responses. It should be noted that Members who work during the day may find it difficult to attend training if there is no evening session.

Afternoon and evening	2
Morning and afternoon	3
Morning and evening	1
Morning	2
Evening	1
No preference	4

4.14   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 adjusted in order to accommodate training that may need a longer session or where there are costs of using external training providers. Mandatory Licensing Committee training will, as usual, be run as one afternoon session, as will the mandatory training for Appeals Committee Members. Training delivered for Members of the Audit Committee is generally held as an evening session only.

Safeguarding Training

4.15   The Assistant Director, Community and Housing Services has arranged for an elearning module to be developed that will cover Safeguarding - Level One. This has been rolled out to and is mandatory for all Council staff. The proposal is that the module be adapted for use on iPads so that it can be completed by Members on either a PC or iPad. Councillors will have the option of undertaking the training on a PC in the Council's Rochford offices IT training room, if they find this more convenient. The aim, subject to agreement by the Standards Committee, is that the training be rolled out at the beginning of the new Municipal Year and that Members be asked to complete the module within four weeks. It is anticipated that the module will be made available for use by Parish/Town Councils also.

4.16   This course is a basic self learning module that has a quiz at the end, with a requirement to achieve a pass; the quiz can be taken as many times as necessary to achieve the pass mark.

4.17   Although there is no statutory requirement for Councillors to complete Safeguarding training, the Council has a duty of care to safeguard children and adults at risk. The Essex Safeguarding Children and Adults Board recommend this level of basic training as a minimum for Councillors (who have limited interaction with children/adults at risk) and there is a requirement to evidence this level of awareness when the Council carries out its safeguarding audits. Currently, the Council has self-assessed as working towards complying with this requirement. Councillors should also be familiar with the Council's Safeguarding Policy, which details elected Members' responsibilities.

Attendance at training courses

4.18   During the course of the 2016/17 year, in view of the relatively low attendance at certain training courses, the Standards Committee may wish to consider emphasising to Members the value of maximum attendance at highly recommended training via an approach to Group Leaders. The following courses were identified as being of particular benefit to Members:

Health and Safety, which advises Members of their responsibilities under legislation. (Member feedback following the session on 21 March included a comment that the Health and Safety profile needed raising and addressing and that the training should be mandatory for all Members.)

Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct, which covers Members' conduct, standards and the requirements around pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

Safeguarding, it is proposed (see paragraphs 4.15 to 4.17) to introduce a self-learning (elearning) module that will cover Safeguarding – Level One.

5   PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING

5.1   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 Council and that additional places incur a charge of £40 per attendee.

5.2   In Part One of the 2016/17 training programme the District Council arranged for an Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct training course to be delivered to Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks on 21 July at 10 am. There were 12 attendees, with representatives from eight of the Parish/Town Councils. In addition, Parish/Town Council Members/Clerks were invited to attend the Business Continuity/Waste & Recycling, Chairing Skills and Local Highways

Panel courses. Parish/Town Councils also attended the Police and Crime Commissioner presentation in September.

5.3   In Part Two of the Programme two courses were offered to Parish/Town Councils: Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing.

5.4   In addition, Parish/Town Councils were invited to attend an ECC Briefing Session on Highways Strategy; representatives from six of the Parish/Town Councils attended.

5.5   The briefing on Health and Safety on 21 March 2017, delivered by an external presenter, and covering a range of health and safety aspects, including elected Member responsibilities, was offered to Parish/Town Councils. The usual amount of £40 was applied to any places additional to the first free place.

Parish/Town Council Planning Training Sessions

5.6   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 would be designed specifically for Parish/Town Councils and made available to one representative from each Parish/Town Council free of charge, but chargeable for further delegates.

5.7   The Assistant Director, Planning and Regeneration Services is proposing a planning training session for Parish/Town Councils on 8 June in the evening. The training will be run by officers in the District Council's Planning Department and will be designed specifically for Parish/Town Councils: Parish/Town Clerks have been contacted to ask to advise of any specific planning topics that their Councillors would find it useful to be covered. These responses will be used to inform the content of the training.

Deputy Leader Visits to Parish/Town Councils

5.8   Over the last few months the Deputy Leader, Cllr M J Steptoe, visited each of the Parish/Town Councils. During these visits he raised the issue of training and why Parish/Town Council attendance at District run courses was generally low. One reason given was cost and that having only one free space on appropriate courses was restrictive. A consensus among the Councils was that it would be useful to have training specific to the role of the Parish/Town Council delivered by Rochford District Council officers at Parish/Town Council venues, rather than at the District Council offices in Rayleigh. It was suggested that the Parishes could be grouped together geographically to receive this training: how this would work in practice would have to be considered. The usual charge would apply, that is, one representative from each Parish/Town Council free of charge, but a charge of £40 for additional places. Courses that were of particular interest were identified as Planning and Local Highway Panels.

5.9 It should be noted that such arrangements would require additional resource, both financially and in officer time. To date, the prime purpose of the Learning and Development Programme has been to provide training for District Council Members. Further information on possible options for pursuing the suggestions from the Parish/Town Councils could be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

6   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The cost of Member learning and development is met from the Member training budget, which is set at £6,500 for 2017/18. Parish/Town Council attendees and attendees from other local authorities are charged as appropriate.
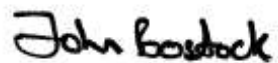
7   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8   RECOMMENDATIONS

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

(1) To receive the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2016/17 as appended.

(2) To endorse the proposals for the content of the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2017/18 as set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.12.

(3) To consider whether timings should remain at 1.30 pm and 7.30 pm for the majority of courses or whether they should be offered at different times of the day.

(4) That the Safeguarding - Level One elearning module be offered to Members.

(5) That a communication be sent from the Committee to Group Leaders asking that they emphasise to their Members the benefit of maximum attendance at highly recommended Member training courses.

(6) Whether a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee on possible options for pursuing the suggestions from the Parish/Town Councils.

John Bostock

John Bostock

Assistant Director, Democratic Services

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power 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 to NOVEMBER 2016

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recommended		Recommended / Optional	
				P	A	P	A	P	A
C I Black				3	2	4	0	6	0
J C Burton		#	+	2	2	4	1	7	0
Mrs L A Butcher ~		#		0	0	5	1	8	1
M R Carter		#		4	4	4	1	5	0
Mrs I Cassar				2	2	3	0	9	1
N L Cooper			+	2	2	3	0	8	0
T G Cutmore	E	#		2	2	4	3	7	1
R R Dray		#	+	2	2	5	2	6	1
D S Efde				4	4	4	3	4	0
A H Eves				2	2	4	1	7	0
Mrs J R Gooding			+	5	5	4	2	4	3
J D Griffin		#	+	3	2	4	0	6	0
B T Hazlewood		#	+	5	4	4	4	4	2
N J Hookway			+	3	3	3	0	7	1
Mrs D Hoy				5	5	4	0	4	0
M Hoy			+	3	3	3	0	7	1
Mrs T J Hughes				4	4	3	1	6	1
G J Ioannou	E			4	3	3	0	6	1
M J Lucas-Gill		#	+	3	3	4	0	6	2
Mrs J R Lumley	E			2	2	3	1	8	4

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 to NOVEMBER 2016

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recommended		Recommended / Optional	
				P	A	P	A	P	A
Mrs C M Mason			+	3	3	3	0	7	0
E O K Mason				3	3	3	0	7	0
J R F Mason		#	+	3	3	4	0	6	1
D Merrick		#		4	4	5	4	4	3
R Milne			+	4	3	4	2	5	0
T E Mountain				3	2	4	0	6	1
J E Newport				4	3	3	0	6	1
R A Oatham				5	5	3	0	5	1
Mrs C E Roe	E	#		2	2	4	1	7	0
Mrs L Shaw			+	4	4	3	2	6	5
S P Smith	E			3	3	3	0	7	0
D J Sperring	E			4	4	3	2	6	4
C M Stanley			+	3	3	3	3	7	4
M J Steptoe	E	#		3	2	4	3	6	1
I H Ward	E			5	5	3	2	5	2
M Webb		#		1	1	5	3	7	3
Mrs C A Weston ~		#		1	1	4	0	8	0
A L Williams			+	4	4	3	1	6	4
S A Wilson				3	3	3	1	7	0

KEY

P	–	**total number of attendances possible**
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