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## MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2004/05

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Training programme 2004/05. The report also contains details of Member attendance at training courses in 2003/04.

### 2 MEMBERS ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS

- 2.1 A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period 20 May 2003 – 24 March 2004 is appended at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Members will recall that this Committee felt it appropriate to indicate that each Councillor be expected to attend at least one planning related session per year (Minute 39/03).
- 2.3 Details of Parish/Town Council attendance are attached at Appendix 2.

### 3 REVIEW OF 2003/04 TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Based on the 24 responses received to the recent questionnaire circulated to all Members of the Council including Independent Members of the Standards Committee, relating to a review of the training programme for 2003/04 and the plans for the forthcoming programme, the following key points have been made:

- The majority of Members are satisfied with the current provision in terms of the mix of subjects and presenters, and also with the venues and timing of courses (held in the afternoons and repeated in the evening) although a request was made that the afternoon sessions should start at 1.30 pm instead of 2 pm.
- Most Members would find it helpful to distinguish between 'introductory courses for newer Members and 'advanced' for long-standing Members.

- 3.2 In respect of the question about why Members were not able to attend training courses in 2003/04 the following answers were provided:-

- Work/family schedule did not enable it (9 responses)
- Timing of courses was unsuitable (5 responses)
- Content of courses was not appropriate (2 responses)
- Attended similar courses in previous years (6 responses)
- Other reasons listed were holidays; similar courses provided at work; illness; other Council business (ie Chairman of the Council).

**4 TRAINING PROGRAMME 2004/05**

- 4.1 Members of this Committee have previously agreed that training be divided into two types – Induction and Competency and that each be categorised as either 'Recommended' or 'Optional', depending on the course content (Minute 39/03).
- 4.2 Members need to determine that the suggested category for each session is appropriate.
- 4.3 All Members of the Council together with Independent Members of the Standards Committee will be invited to attend the sessions.
- 4.4 In line with this Committee's decision (Minute 339/03), one place will be offered on appropriate training sessions to Parish/Town Councils. It is proposed to continue the current practice whereby a letter is sent to Parish/Town Councils prior to the commencement of each section of the programme, including details and advising which sessions would be appropriate.

**5 INDUCTION TRAINING 2004/05**

- 5.1 A proposed programme is attached at Appendix 3. To coincide with the European elections, the District's elections this year will not be held until June and so it will be necessary to provide a shorter Induction programme in June and July 2004.
- 5.2 Some flexibility is therefore necessary and, dependent on the number of newly elected Members, the first two sessions could be combined.
- 5.3 As agreed by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 10 July 2003, Chairmanship Skills has been included as part of the Induction Programme.
- 5.4 The induction programme is recommended for new Members, and optional for existing Members. Chairmanship training is recommended for Committee Chairmen and optional for other Members.
- 5.5 The dates have been provisionally agreed with the relevant officers and the external presenter.

**6 COMPETENCY TRAINING 2004/05**

- 6.1 An outline list of potential topics is attached at Appendix 4 for initial consideration, pending a full report at your next meeting. The training will be delivered in two parts – in October/November 2004 and February/March 2005, but the subjects at this stage are entirely flexible and have not been confirmed. There are currently 12 training slots identified in the timetable.

- 6.2 The subjects for consideration have largely been determined as a result of new legislation, where it is timely for Members to be updated on issues, or as a result of feedback from Members.
- 6.3 Conducts/Standards issued will be covered as part of the Induction training, but a more comprehensive training session is proposed as part of the Competency programme.
- 6.4 It is understood that, following the one day's training session in December 2003 on the new Licensing functions, a further one day's training will be required to bring Members up to date with the statutory guidance, which, at the time of writing, has still not been issued.
- 6.5 A second half-day session for Members of the Appeals and Licensing Committee will be required on the operation of a licensing hearing, to include some case studies.
- 6.6 A requirement of the emergency planning best value review is that media/press training is provided for Members and this also proved to be a popular request from the Member questionnaire.
- 6.7 Officers have specifically requested that training in the following areas be provided; Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement/Vehicle Licensing/Community Transport (combined in one session), Housing Benefits and the role of Internal/External Audit for Members of the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.8 In developing a detailed Competency programme for full consideration at the next meeting of this Committee, consideration will have to be given to distinguishing between 'introductory' and 'advanced' courses.

## **7 MODERN MEMBERS' CONFERENCE**

- 7.1 The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) have written to the Council enclosing details of a national conference to launch their Modern Members' programme of in house member development work on Friday 2 July 2004 in Manchester. As well as the modern members programme, this will also be the first presentation of the Political Skills project being undertaken for the IDeA by Professor J Silvester. It is hoped that this project will provide a nationally recognised set of member skills that can be used both to attract new people to become councillors and provide positive development opportunities for existing councillors. This Committee may wish to recommend the attendance of a Member at this conference.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The costs of the training programme can be met from the Members' Support and Training Budget.

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**9 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 One place will be offered to each Parish/Town Council on appropriate training sessions.

**10 RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (1) To note the summary report of Members' attendance at training sessions during the municipal year 2003/04.
- (2) To approve the Induction Training Programme for 2004/05.
- (3) To consider the initial ideas relating to the proposed Competency Programme and make comments for inclusion in a full report to the next meeting.
- (4) To consider whether to nominate a Member to attend the IdeA Modern Members' Conference. (HAMS)

Sarah Fowler

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**Background Papers:**

Returned questionnaires from Members  
Correspondence from IDEa

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