

## **MEMBER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2005/06**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Training programme for 2005/06. The report also contains details of Member attendance at training courses in 2004/05.

### **2 MEMBERS ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS**

- 2.1 A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period 23 June 2004 – 23 March 2005 is attached 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.
- 2.4 In addition to the opportunities provided by the training programme in 2004/05, the Leader of the Council has attended the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Leaders' Course, and 2 Member Away Days on the budget have been organised.

### **3 MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE – REVIEW OF 2004/05**

- 3.1 Based on the 22 responses received to the recent questionnaire circulated to all Members of the Council including Independent Members of the Standards Committee, and which included a review of the training programme for 2004/05, the following key points have been made:-
- the majority of respondents were satisfied with the programme in terms of the mix of subjects and presenters;
  - individual comments were made about some presenters simply reading through their handouts and the fact that the size of type used in some of the presentations and handouts was too small to read;
  - a comment was also made that some training sessions were too short to enable all the detail to be adequately covered or held too late into the evening;
  - 9 respondents preferred the use of the Civic Suite at Rayleigh, 9 did not have a preference, and 4 preferred the Freight House at Rochford;

- 19 respondents felt that each course should be held in the afternoon and repeated in the evening, with only 1 person favouring an afternoon only course and 2 people preferring an evening only session. No respondents opted for weekend training courses.

#### **4 MEMBER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE – REQUESTS FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

4.1 A skills and knowledge audit aimed at helping to identify the training which should be included in the 2005/06 programme was included in the questionnaire and based on the responses received, the following development requests have been identified:-

- Core skills and knowledge – the most requested development needs were
  - quasi-judicial decision making (11)
  - Corporate Plan and key objectives (10)
  - media skills (9)
  - setting the budget/financial strategy (9)
- Leadership – the most requested development needs were
  - effective overview & scrutiny (10)
  - chairing meetings (7)
  - effective leadership (7)
- Role of the Ward Councillor – the most requested development needs were
  - involvement with community groups (13)
  - advice surgeries (8)
  - setting up community meetings (8)
- Improving performance – the most requested development needs were
  - e-Government (15)
  - Gershon (13)
  - waste management (12)
  - performance management (8)

4.2 The questionnaire also identified a number of different ways in which people may prefer to learn. The responses were as follows

- interactive training, eg, workshops, role play, case studies (12)
- visiting other authorities (12)
- conferences (11)
- learning review session (4)
- shadowing, mentoring, peer support, critical friend (3)

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**5 TRAINING PROGRAMME 2005/06 - OVERVIEW**

- 5.1 The training programme for 2005/06 needs to be responsive to the CPA Improvement Plan which identifies priority areas for Member training as overview and scrutiny, leadership, decision-making and chairmanship skills. It also needs to take account of the corporate priorities of the Council, and the aspirations for the role of Councillor, as identified in the IDeA Member Skills Framework, and agreed by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2004.
- 5.2 The recently published 'Vibrant Local Leadership' discussion document from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) highlights the issue of local leadership and Councillors acting in the role as the local champion. The document also makes reference to the importance of the development of a core skills framework for local Councillors because of the increasingly demanding role of local leadership.
- 5.3 As there are no District Council elections being held this municipal year, there is no requirement for the usual Induction training programme which is held immediately afterwards.
- 5.4 Therefore, provision has been made on the proposed meetings timetable for the new municipal year for training sessions to be held in three sessions, ie June/July, October/November and February/March with 6 dates identified in each session (18 in total).
- 5.5 The IDeA recommends a strategic approach to Member development and offers a Modern Members' Programme. This is an attempt to provide a national framework for Member development. The modules are delivered by a Member peer, together with a consultant from the IDeA. A feature of the programme is the opportunity to involve elected Members of all parties in the delivery of the programme. Based on the principles of adult learning, the programme will build on Members' existing knowledge and skills.
- 5.6 Other Councils have cited the fact that whilst they already had extensive Member training programmes, the IDeA helped achieve a proper framework, which enables relatively new and experienced Members alike to keep up with the pace of change.

**Joint Member/officer training**

- 5.7 There may be circumstances where it is advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions. These can lead to:-
- better use of resources where the requirements of both groups coincide, such as skills training, understanding new legislation;
  - a spin off benefit to participants in understanding the constraints and requirements of Members and officers;

- in the operation of the scrutiny function, for example, better working practices and relationships between officers and Members can be achieved.

### **Working with local authorities**

- 5.8 Member training is seen as an area of potential joint working with, for example, Basildon and Castle Point Councils, possible areas of work being legislative updates and best practice. Work is also underway via the Essex Local Government Association (ELEA) to look into the feasibility of Essex-wide Member training and development opportunities.

## **6 TRAINING PROGRAMME 2005/06 – SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

- 6.1 It is proposed that the programme for 2005/06 is separated into 3 strands:

- Role development – which will look at ways that Members can develop their roles. This will cover priority areas such as leadership and decision-making skills, and overview and scrutiny skills;
- Technical skills – which will look at the way the Council works both corporately and in specific service areas;
- Personal skills – which will cover the skills needed to carry out a Member's role in the Council and in the community.

- 6.2 The content of the programme will be determined by the requirements of the CPA and the needs identified by Members.

### **Role Development**

- 6.3 It is proposed that the content of this strand will cover:-

- Leadership and decision-making
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Working with the community

- 6.4 It is likely that these sessions will be delivered by IDeA, by using relevant modules from their Modern Members Programme (see paragraph 5.4). As an alternative, the University of Birmingham Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) can run tailor made courses on leadership and overview and scrutiny. In addition, Mr Ian Davidson, the Relationship Manager & Area Performance Lead assigned to Rochford by the Audit Commission under CPA, has kindly indicated that he is willing to undertake training sessions around Overview & Scrutiny.

- 6.5 These sessions may dovetail with work proposed by the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are tasked to undertake a review of Overview & Scrutiny within Rochford over the coming year. As part

of that review they are likely to seek assistance from bodies such as IDeA and INLOGOV. They also propose visits to best practice authorities that will be of assistance in developing skills and knowledge.

### **Technical Skills**

6.6 It is proposed that the content of this strand will cover:-

- Corporate Plan and key objectives
- financial strategy/setting the budget (2 Member workshops are already scheduled for November 2005 and January 2006)
- planning
- quasi-judicial decision making (licensing and appeals)
- e-government
- Gershon
- waste management

It is likely that the majority of these sessions will be delivered by Council staff.

### **Personal Skills**

6.7 It is proposed that the content of this strand will cover:-

- chairmanship skills
- information technology (IT)
- media skills

These sessions will be delivered by external trainers.

### **Information Technology (IT) Skills**

6.8 There was a good response to the IT Skills Assessment, prepared by Essex County Council, which was circulated to Members of the Council last Autumn.

6.9 This had been agreed by the Standards Committee as a first step towards one of the requirements in the ODPM's "Priority Outcomes Paper for Local E-government" of establishing an e-skills training programme for Council Members.

6.10 Members identified a range of training requirements, specifically in Computer Basics, Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint software, use of the Internet and File Management.

- 6.11 The County Council has developed its training programmes in conjunction with British Telecom and can provide a range of on-demand courses to meet this Council's needs. These could be provided to small groups of up to 6 at the Rochford offices or up to 12 at the Rochford & Castle Point Adult Community College.
- 6.12 For any Members requiring a more detailed course, it may be possible to investigate attendance at a European Computer Driving Licence course.
- 6.13 It is proposed that the priority areas set out in the CPA are identified as 'highly recommended' courses (leadership and decision-making, overview and scrutiny and chairmanship skills) as well as the technical stream sessions on the Corporate Plan and planning; that all the remaining sessions are identified as 'recommended', with the exception of IT and media skills that are identified as 'optional'.
- 6.14 The Standards Committee may also wish to consider
- The location of training courses and whether the split of two-thirds of the training at the Civic Suite and one-third at the Freight House should be maintained;
  - The timing of courses, and specifically whether courses should still be held in the afternoon and repeated in the evening;
  - The style and format of training, taking into account the comments received and the responses in paragraph 4.2;
  - The provision of buffets – as a result of comments about the amount of food often remaining at the end of sessions, at the enrolment stage of the Competency part 2 programme officers introduced a question asking those enrolling to indicate whether they required a buffet.

## **7 THE EAST OF ENGLAND CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 The East of England Charter has been developed in partnership with the IDeA and South East Employers and is based on the North West Employers' Charter, building on the experience of their well established and successful regional Member Development Charter to which all Councils in that region have made a commitment. A copy is attached at Appendix 3.
- 7.2 The East of England Charter has a number of objectives as follows:-
- Commitment to Member Development
  - Strategic Approach to Member Development
  - Member learning and development in place
  - Learning and development is effective in building capacity
  - Elected member development promotes work life balance and citizenship.

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- 7.3 If the Council is to adopt the Charter, an action plan then has to be developed for implementation, as set out in the Appendix.
- 7.4 There is a cost of £1,000 in undertaking to work towards achieving the Charter.
- 7.5 In some authorities Member Development Committees consisting of a combination of Members and officers have been successful in the planning of Member development programmes. They can meet regularly throughout the year to plan and co-ordinate development activities and address individual and group needs. This enables all Member development activities to be more closely evaluated. It may be that this type of initiative will be required to ensure the implementation of the Charter, if agreed by the Standards Committee.

## **8 EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN MEMBER TRAINING**

- 8.1 The following paragraphs contain examples of best practice that are being adopted by an increasing number of local authorities. The Standards Committee may wish to consider whether any of these should be reviewed in further detail for implementation in future years. All of these initiatives have resource implications in terms of Member and officer time that would need to be considered prior to any implementation.

### **Performance Development Planning**

- 8.2 Performance Development Planning (PDP) can be offered by the IDeA, although some Councils operate these through senior officers or by senior Members in political groups offering development reviews to their Members.
- 8.3 Personal interviews are conducted which are used to design training sessions. A set of competencies tailored to the individual Council and its Corporate Plan is then developed and the training requirements needed by each Councillor to meet the competencies, which can be determined at a number of levels, forms the basis of their personal development plan. Needs would be continually re-assessed and personal plans updated. The plans provide tangible evidence of individual and Council commitment to building elected Member capacity and encourage Members to accept personal responsibility for continuous development, including communication with the local community.
- 8.4 As an example, Personal Development Plans may include:-
- Council vision and priorities
  - individual's Council Roles/Committees
  - what the Councillor feels particularly pleased with that they've been responsible for or helped bring about over the past 12 months.
  - what they hope to do as a Councillor over the next 12 months

- benefits from training to date
- planned training and development activities/learning opportunities that will help them carry out their various roles as a Councillor.

### **Training and Development Log**

- 8.5 A Training and Development Log could be provided for each Member. This Log should contain the plan of development actions to be undertaken, together with the learning objectives, and also a record when completed, and an objective assessment of the effectiveness of the action. These plans should be looked at on a 12-month Action programme, and also a 'longer-term development plan'. Individual reviews may be achieved through the training log, or appraisals.

### **Top Team's Leadership Programme**

- 8.6 This programme, which can be delivered by the IDeA in partnership with expert contributors aims to give chief officers and leading Members the tools to improve their relationships and their achievements. The programme consists of between four and six, one-day events, perhaps held over a period of a year, that focus on developing leadership capability. Every programme is tailored specifically for the individual authority and starts with an initial diagnosis of the issues it faces.
- 8.7 Everyone who attends the programme is interviewed beforehand. The first module considers the outcome of the diagnosis and looks at how the teams are working together. Subsequent modules could look at managing change, working with partners, how to distinguish strategy from policy and how to manage people. Each module finishes with a session focused on personal and team action planning and the barriers that may be holding the Council back.

### **Ward Visits**

- 8.8 Ward Visits have the potential to re-inforce the important role of Members in their local community and IDeA can provide a managed programme involving Member peers.
- 8.9 The general purpose of using ward visits as a means of Member development is to challenge and inspire Councillors in their community leadership role and to see how their role in the ward links to the community strategy and Council priorities.
- 8.10 Visits are seen as a means of using peer Members to:\_\_
- Help build a relationship of understanding and trust;
  - Communicate key messages;
  - Make progress in building elected Member capacity.



- 8.11 The anticipated outcome is the provision of a ward map of what Members perceive to be the main local issues and a report including main observations, identified ward priorities and matters for consideration and action.

## **9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Breakdown of Costs of the 2004/05 Training Programme**

- 9.1 The cost of employing external presenters was £4,700; the cost of hiring the Freight House was £1,000 and the cost of buffets was £3,100.
- 9.2 There was a nil cost to the Member training budget in using the Civic Suite and training led by officers.

### **Funding for the 2005/06 programme**

- 9.3 There is provision of £15,000 within the Members' Support and Training Budget. As part of the CPA Improvement Plan process, a bid for £36,000 per annum for 2005/06 and 2006/07 has been made to the ODPM Capacity Building Programme for funding for Member training in the areas of leadership, chairmanship, overview and scrutiny and decision making, as well as critical friend/mentoring for the Leader. The outcome of this bid is awaited.
- 9.4 The programme outlined in paragraph 6 will require the funding bid to ODPM to be successful in order for it to be implemented in full.

## **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 2004/05.
- (2) To consider the responses from the review of the 2004/05 training and development programme.
- (3) To consider the proposals for the Member Training Programme for 2005/06 as set out in paragraph 6.
- (4) To consider whether to adopt the East of England Charter for Member Development as set out in paragraph 7.
- (5) To consider the potential developments for future years as set out in paragraph 8.

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**Background Papers:-**

Member training programmes from Derbyshire Dales, Brent and Lancashire Councils

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