
CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the process of Charter reaccreditation in January 2014.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council achieved Charter status in October 2010. The Charter is valid for three years and is now due for renewal. An 18-month interim review took place in April 2012 via a conference call. The Council has re-committed to renewal of the Charter and an assessment day has been organised to take place on Tuesday 14 January 2014. During the day the assessing body, South East Employers, will undertake a reassessment of the Council's Member training programme, paying particular attention to the 'direction of travel' since achieving the award in 2010.
- 2.2 A draft timetable for the assessment day is attached as Appendix 1. Standards Committee Members will be interviewed at 1.30 pm.

3 ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 As part of the assessment process an Action Plan will need to be submitted to South East Employers prior to 14 January. A draft of the Self-Assessment Action Plan is attached to this report as Appendix 2. Members may have suggestions that could usefully be incorporated into this document.
- 3.2 A key aspect that the assessment team will be considering is the Council's 'direction of travel' since achieving the Charter: this was a feature of the 18-month interim review. Attached as Appendix 3 is a document setting out where we sit with recommendations emanating from the assessment day three years ago. It would be appropriate for Members to familiarise themselves with this document in advance of the assessment day.
- 3.3 Also attached (as Appendix 4) is an extract from the assessors' report in 2010, which highlights the areas that were felt by the assessors to be particular strengths of the Council's Member training programme.
- 3.4 As with the previous assessment day, a document setting out information on the nature of the Charter and aspects of the assessment is attached at Appendix 5.
- 3.5 A file containing the evidence detailed in the Action Plan is being compiled for the assessors, to accord with their requirements.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 At its meeting on 4 October 2012 the Standards Committee endorsed the re-commitment of funds through the budgetary process in the amount of £2,250 for the Charter for Elected Member Development. The payment of this amount

has been split between 2012/13 and 2013/14 in the amounts of £937.50 and £1,312.50 respectively.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is proposed:-

- (1) That Members review the Self-Assessment Action Plan (Appendix 1) and provide suggestions for anything that could usefully be included.
- (2) That Members assimilate Appendix 3, the 'direction of travel' statement, so that they are prepared for the assessment day.
- (3) That Members assimilate Appendix 5 so that they are prepared for the assessment day.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None.

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

Item 5 Appendix 1



**East of England Charter for Elected Member Development
Authority : Rochford District Council**

**Assessment Schedule
Date : Tuesday 14 January 2014**

The assessment team to comprise:-

- Peer Assessor - Cllr (to be confirmed)
- Officer Assessor - (to be confirmed)
- Mark Palmer - Development Director, South East Employers

10.00	Assessment team arrival - Locate to room	
10.30	Interview 1 Albert Bugeja John Bostock Michelle Power	- Key officers:- - Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services - Member Services Manager - Committee Administrator
11.15	Break	
11.30	Interview 2	- Leader of the Council
12.15	Lunch	
13.00	Interview 3	- Chief Executive
13.30	Interview 4	- Elected Member Development Group (Standards Committee Members)
14.15	Interview 5	- Officer, Front Line Service
14.30	Break	
14.45	Interview 6	- Leaders of Opposition Parties

- 15.15 Workshop - **Non Executive councillors (6 - 12 members)**
to be as representative as possible of
gender, age profile, ethnicity
- 16.00 Assessment Team Meeting
- 16.15 Assessment Team Feedback session with Project Manager.
- 16.30 Close

Within one month of the assessment visit a report will be sent to the council outlining whether they have achieved Charter status. This will include the positive areas where the council has excelled and areas in need of future improvement.



East of England Member Development Charter Self- Assessment

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER SELF-ASSESSMENT			
1. Commitment to councillor development			
Elements	Specific Minimum Requirements for Charter	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN/ WHOM
<p>1.1. Political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of councillors.</p> <p>What this means in practice Political and managerial leadership put strategies into place to improve councillor and council performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear commitment from the top political and managerial leadership • Signed commitment to member development and action plan • Established all party training and development task group that meets regularly • There is a clear strategy • Feedback from Members confirms that strategy & actions described, take place • Named councillor(s) and officer(s) responsible for councillor development • Evidence that all-party training and development task group meet on regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-2018. The Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services (HLEMS) has responsibility detailed in the Council's organisation Chart for Member Training and Development. • LEMS Divisional Plan shows Charter re-commitment to be achieved by October 13 (page 4). The Plan shows an aim of the Division is to provide support services for Councillors, including training (page 2) and consult with Councillors about the Member training programme. One of the published plans for the Service is the Member training and development Policy Statement, which sets out plans for Member training. • Member L&D operated by the Standards Committee, which consists of cross-party membership and Parish/Independent members, and which meets regularly. • Minutes of Standards Committee meetings with mid-term evaluation of training as well as report in April for forthcoming year. • Strategy for Member Learning and Development contained in Member Development Policy statement. • Post-course evaluation forms scrutinised by officer team and comments noted and actioned. Annual self-assessment forms - 73% returned in 2013. • Albert Bugeja (HLEMS), John Bostock (Member Services Manager) and Michelle Power (Committee Administrator) are the officers responsible for Member development. (HLEMS delivers Standards training and Appeals Committee training.) • Members of the Standards Committee are involved in formulating policy and making decisions on Member development. 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>1.2. Councillor Learning and Development Policy</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has a written policy that has been distributed to all councillors, specifying the principles and operational procedures for councillor learning and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Commitment Policy easily accessible to members 	<p>Opportunities to Learn and Develop – Members’ booklet posted onto Council’s Intranet for all officers to access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Development Statement and Policy prepared and updated – copies placed in the Members’ Office and Lounge. (Reference to these documents in Member Learning and Development booklet 2013/14 (page 3).) 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>1.3. Access to learning and development takes into account diversity of needs</p> <p>What this means in practice Political and managerial leadership can describe specific actions that they have taken to ensure equal access to learning and development opportunities for all councillors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of events takes account of cultural and personal circumstances • Elected members confirm the action taken to ensure equality of opportunity to development • The development programme includes a range of delivery methods to meet the different learning styles of members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of courses run in afternoon and repeated in evening. This provides access to those Members who work or have carer responsibilities. • Officers have provided 'mop-up' training sessions for those Members unable to attend mandatory Licensing/Appeals training. (example emails) • Course handouts emailed to those Members unable to attend training. • Introduction of e-learning modules to complement the classroom-style teaching sessions. • Use of different techniques to accommodate different learning styles including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lecture-style presentations – Production of a video to demonstrate different scenarios (e.g. Standards training 23/5/13 – video illustrating various situations where Members interests can be an issue. This introduced an element of humour, was well received by Members and helped to enhance the Member/officer relationship). – DVD presentation by the Probation Service in the Council Chamber, punctuated with questions and answers and personal examples. – Annual tour of the District by minibus of current planning sites in the District. – Planning site visits provide Members with contact with planning officers and a knowledge of how the planning process operates, as well as an idea of the sites themselves. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>1.4. Designated budget for councillor development</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has a designated budget for councillor development which is adequate to meet priority development needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is explicit and clearly identified and monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget of £3,500 allocated specifically for Member training in 2012/13 and 2013/14 (as part of the Core Budget set at full Council on 29/1/13, page 56) (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13, page 7.6) Reduction of budget in 2012 due to Council cuts has resulted in various cost saving measures, while ensuring that the quality of training is maintained. Officer time in respect of those courses run by Rochford District Council officers is not re-charged to the Member Development budget. There is also a separate budget for Review Committee training - £2000 for 2013/14. Charging for Parish Councils (page 2 LEMS Divisional Plan). Those courses that are judged to be beneficial to the District Council for Parish Councils to attend are provided free of charge. Handouts from training courses are emailed to all Parish Clerks. 	
<p>1.5. Officer support for councillors development</p> <p>What this means in practice Officer/ s of the council have responsibility for co-ordinating councillor development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members confirm that there is an officer who supports their learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Services Manager and Committee Administrator shown as contacts on page 16 of the Member Learning and Development booklets. Job descriptions of HLEMS, Member Services Manager (MSM) and Committee Administrator (CA) contain responsibility for taking forward Member learning and development (extracts from Job descriptions). MSM shown on page 3 of the Divisional Plan as lead officer responsible for Member development (extract from Divisional Plan). CA has regular email and phone contact with all Members and is known to Members as having responsibility for this role. CA often attends training sessions to assist with administrative aspects of training and to have contact with Members. (example emails to Members) 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

2. Strategic approach to councillor development			
Elements	Specific Minimum Requirements for Charter	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN/ WHOM
<p>2.1 Councillor led strategy</p> <p>What this means in practice Representative councillors are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of councillor development strategies, possibly through an established all party task group or other all party committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions about member development are taken by some form of formally constituted body of members Strategy identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with council's aims and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Standards Committee has responsibility for the Learning and Development programme. The Committee is formed of main and opposition parties, and includes Parish and Independent representation. End of year and interim reports to Standards Committee to agree strategy and direction that training should take. At these meetings Members agree the training course to be included in the forthcoming Learning and Development programme. Each training booklet produced clearly shows which of the Council's objectives each course is linked to. Structure of the Standards Committee changed on 17/12/12 to increase the number of District Members (including 2 opposition party Members), resulting in a wider representation. There are still 4 Independent Persons and 3 Parish Members (although they have no voting rights, they have an involvement in discussions around training). (Stds Cttee 11/4/13) Summary of end of course evaluation forms from each phase of development is maintained by Member Services. (Summary of Phase 1 2013/14) The Member Development Policy provides for Member involvement in monitoring and evaluation of training, including annual self-assessment questionnaires, end of course evaluation questionnaires and a half-year evaluation report to Standards Committee. Council's Senior Management Team provides input regarding the courses they wish to offer Members to ensure that learning and development meets corporate objectives. (Procedure document – Member Learning & Development, Item 1.4 (pages 1-2)) Mandatory training for Development, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members to strengthen knowledge of relevant law and procedures. The Member Development Policy makes strong and clear links with the Council's objectives. (Page 4) 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member training booklet states that the programme has been formulated to help the Council meet its corporate objectives and show linkages between courses and corporate objectives. (2013/14 Member Learning & Development booklet, page 3) 	
<p>2.2. Councillor roles are clearly defined</p> <p>What this means in practice The various representative roles are clearly defined and councillors are able to describe how they contribute to the achievement of community, political and council objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their ward and council wide roles Member role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including ward councillor Elected members are clear about what the council is trying to achieve and the part they play in this as councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member role descriptions and skills developed and updated – these can assist in planning Member development courses. The Council's Constitution contains Portfolio Holder responsibilities. (extract from Constitution, Section 3 – 3.26-3.29)) Each Committee and Sub-Committee has its own terms of reference. (sample Committee agenda and corresponding extract from Constitution, 3.22) Training booklet to detail which particular Members each course is primarily aimed at. (example from booklet) Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council' produced for use by prospective candidates. (copy of Guide 2013/14) Budget awaydays The yearly Key Policies and Actions report identifies the main policies and projects to be progressed in the context of benefits for residents and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Full Council 26/2/13). A guide is produced for new Councillors. 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.3. Individual Learning and Development Plans</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has a structured process for regularly assessing councillors' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System / process exists to identify individual development needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaires issued annually to each Member – 73% return rate for 2012/13. Training Programme agreed by Standards Committee, with formal half-yearly review. (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13) Some training is identified as mandatory (Development/Licensing/Appeals Committees), or necessary for the fulfilment of the Authority's stated corporate objectives, or induction (when appropriate). Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet May-September 2013) End of event questionnaires issued and results noted and acted upon if necessary. (End of event questionnaire) • Tailored training is provided for Review and Audit Committee Members. (Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet May 2012) • Individual Members who wish to attend courses specific to their role can apply to see if this is possible within the budget. • New Development Committee mandatory training arrangements introduced to provide more regular planning sessions throughout the year. This is so Members have an adequate understanding of national and local planning policy to enable them to perform their role as Members of the Development Committee. • LEMS Divisional Plan (p4) shows specific training for Review Committee Members. 	
<p>2.4. Political Leadership and Executive Team development and management</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has a structured process for assessing current and future leadership and Executive Team development needs. Development Programmes are put into Place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published process to assess needs • Joint regular events/development plan that support the top team working together corporately & development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadowing of each of the Executive Portfolios – system being introduced by Council (23/4/13, Minute 84) The Leader to facilitate shadowing arrangements at relevant times. • Chief Executive meets regularly with Council Leader. • Member away days on the Budget for all Members of the Council (two per year). • Regular majority Group meetings to consider direction of Council and development of Members where appropriate. • Joint SMT/Executive awaydays on key corporate priorities, e.g. budget issues • Heads of Service have regular scheduled meetings with Executive Portfolio Holders. 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.5. Committee Learning and Development</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has a structured process for assessing the learning and development needs of all of council committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published system/process to identify needs • Feedback from Members to say it happens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indication of training session details provided to Standards Committee. (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13) • Review Committee Members have training specifically designed to assist them in their role. There is a combination of experienced and new Members on the Committee and each Review Committee Councillor is involved in the interactive training. The RDC Scrutiny Officer takes the first training session and concentrates on the mechanisms of how the Committee works. The follow-up session is taken by the Scrutiny Advisor with the Centre for Public Scrutiny, which covers being an effective 'critical friend' and improving questioning skills. • Mandatory training sessions each year for all Members of Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees to ensure that Members are kept up to date with legislative changes etc. • Arrangements for planning training have been amended to transfer the responsibility for achieving the required level of knowledge to the individual Member. There are now 4 scheduled mandatory planning sessions each year. • Audit Committee training undertaken most years (in particular when there are new Committee Members), aimed primarily at Audit Committee Members. • Standards Committee training has been provided when there have been changes to legislation/structures. • Post course evaluation forms will confirm that Members are satisfied with the quality of the training received. (summary of part 1 2013/14) • Bi-annual report into Standards Committee on Member learning and development. • Sometimes training needs are picked up via the Chief Executive's appraisal process. • Learning needs may be picked via budget awaydays. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.6. Development opportunities are promoted and take into account access requirements.</p> <p>What this means in practice Councillors receive appropriate and adequate notice of development opportunities to allow them to plan in advance. Events are organised at various times, to allow for access by those with work or caring responsibilities. A range of methods are utilised to meet learning needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable of learning opportunities that demonstrates events arranged at different times • Annual programme of development activities published and circulated to all councillors through a variety of channels • Members can give examples of how they receive appropriate and adequate notice of learning opportunities • Training programmes indicate development opportunities available at a range of times allowing access by different groups including those who work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indication of training session details provided to Standards Committee (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13) • Training split into 2 phases. Full course details for each phase of training contained in a booklet and sent to all Members at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of first course. (Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet May 2013) • Members' Bulletin sent weekly with reminder of training courses for forthcoming week. (Example of Members' Bulletin, showing training courses that week) • Return booking form for training courses in each booklet, and returns monitored. (Booking form – Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet May-Sept 2013 – page 18) • Reminder to those who have not returned the booking form (example email). • Notices in Members' Library/Lounge/Office of forthcoming training for each phase of the programme. (example notice) • Plan of training dates made available at the beginning of each calendar year, particularly around mandatory training. (Letter to Members dated 14/12/2012) • Newly elected Members receive advice of mandatory training dates on the night of the election. • The Head of Planning and Transportation provides specifically tailored training sessions for newly elected Members at times agreed with the Members, but before the first Development Committee meeting. (session for two new Members held 24/5/13) • The Council meetings timetable contains training dates for the forthcoming year – this is published after Annual Council each year but available to Members in draft form in March. (example timetable) 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email/letter sent to Councillors during the week of the training to confirm that they are booked to attend the training session/or to ask if they would like to book a place. (Example of email sent) • The majority of courses are arranged to take place at lunchtime and repeated in the evening. This ensures that the majority of Councillors are able to attend one of the sessions, including those who work or are carers. • Dates of training are also detailed in the yearbook, which is issued to Members at the beginning of the Municipal Year. • Reference to the Member Learning and Development programme is included in the Members' Information Guide, which is provided to all Members at the beginning of the Municipal Year. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.7. Joint learning activities with officers, partners and the wider community.</p> <p>What this means in practice Councillors can provide examples of actions taken to encourage joint development opportunities with key partners, officers and community representatives to enhance closer working relationships and understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members can provide examples of elected members learning with, and from, others from stakeholder organisations • External partners are involved in relevant training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant courses offered to Parish/Town Councils. (Example email sent to Councils) • Programmes using external (partner) support for developing Members included courses offered by Essex County Highways and the Probation Service. (extracts from May-Sept 2013 – Member L&D booklet) • It is accepted that it will sometimes be advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions. (report to Standards Committee 11/4/13, item 5.8) This is becoming an increasingly used option. • A DVD produced by the Council’s Legal team, using RDC staff in roles, has proved extremely popular with Councillors. (Feedback forms) This format has been used in Standards training and Appeals Committee training sessions. • Councillors attended a training event around the Localism Act given by the Public Law Partnership, held at Anglia Ruskin University in February 2012. • Public Law Partnership held a Local Government Standards event on 17/9/12 at Castle Point Borough Council offices – officers and Independent Persons of the Standards Committee attended. • Specifically tailored Standards training provided for Parish/Town Councils by the Council’s Monitoring Officer. Requests from Parish Councils resulted in an additional session to be held in September 2013. • Networking opportunities provided by new CCG/Police public forums. The Council liaises with the CCG/Police to hold 2 public meetings per year to cover health matters/crime-related issues. • CE/Leader have regular meetings with Parish/Town Councils. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.8. Corporate Councillor Learning and Development Plan prioritising activities.</p> <p>What this means in practice Bringing together all learning and development plans – individuals, committees, political leadership and teams into a Corporate Plan that is able to prioritise activities according to resources and which links to council's aims & objectives and the development of elected Members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Learning and Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each course in the Learning and Development programme is linked to the relevant corporate objective/s. • The ethos of training documentation (particularly the published Opportunities to Learn and Develop programme booklet) is to pick up and reflect the Council's aims and objectives. 	
<p>2.9. Structured Induction process for all new councillors.</p> <p>What this means in practice Councillors who are new to the council and those who take on new roles receive structured and effective induction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Strategy and programme of events • Induction programme for new councillors • Councillors can describe their induction processes, what they learned and how the learning has helped them to be effective in their role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Strategy – new Members invited to meet the Chief Executive. They each receive an induction pack, which includes training details, Member information guide, Council procedures and code of conduct. (Induction pack for new Members) • Induction Programme for training (May-July) contains mandatory and corporate priority related training. (Opportunities to Learn and Develop booklet May 2013) • Mentoring of new Councillors carried out on a group basis. • Tailored planning training delivered by Head of Planning and Transportation for newly elected members of the Council – to cover information on planning policy and planning legislation, which is mandatory for newly elected Members (Standards Committee 4/10/12 report, para 3.3) • Officer communication with newly elected Councillors to ensure they are not experiencing issues. • LEMS Divisional Plan – new Chairman and Vice Chairman to be inducted. (page 7) 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.10. Evaluation mechanisms that inform future plans.</p> <p>What this means in practice The council has systems in place that effectively evaluate councillor learning and development activity and identifies the benefits for individuals and the council and areas for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top political and managerial leadership can describe how training and development is evaluated and who is responsible • Written up outline approach to evaluate elected member training and development with named member and officer responsibilities • Councillors can describe how learning and development is evaluated and who is responsible for ensuring the evaluations take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of event questionnaires summarised and comments actioned as appropriate. Six-monthly report to Standards Committee on progress of training to date. (Report to Standards Committee 4/10/12, Item 3) • Detailed approach to evaluation of training to be included in Member Development Policy. (copy) • Annual Member self-assessment forms, which as well as requesting information on training for the forthcoming year, asks members to evaluate training received in the previous year. (Copy summary to Standards Committee 11/4/13) 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>2.11. Councillor Learning and Development Reference Group</p> <p>What this means in practice A cross party group of councillors works with relevant officers to direct and support all councillor learning and development activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross party Reference Group remit. • Reference Group minutes of meetings showing active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of Standards Committee (that has a cross-party and Parish/Independent membership) meetings that show active involvement of Councillors in Learning and Development process. • Article 9 (page 2.14) of the Constitution states that a function of the Standards Committee is to determine the Member training programme. There is reference to this on the Standards Committee Agenda. • Minutes from Standards Committee meeting 11/4/13 (showing Member concern around attendance at training) – comparison with previous years provided to Members. • Standards Committee 4/10/12 changes to mandatory planning training arrangements referred to Full Council. (Report and Minutes) 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity			
Elements	Specific Minimum Requirements for Charter	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN/ WHOM
<p>3.1 Councillors learn and develop effectively.</p> <p>What this means in practice Councillors have improved in their confidence and performance in their varied council roles to enhance the performance of the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of end of event questionnaires • Top political and managerial leadership are able to describe the improvements that training and development have brought to the performance of individuals, functions and the council • Members can describe why they did certain activities, what they learnt and what difference it has made to them carrying out their various roles as an elected member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of event questionnaires that show improved Councillor performance in their role (include Review Committee training). • Mandatory planning training introduced in 2009/10 (Council 23/4/09, Minute 101) and updated for 2013/14 (Council 23/10/12, Minute 220) for Development Committee. Mandatory training in place for Licensing and Appeals Committee Members. • Review Committee Members have training specifically designed to assist them in their role. With a combination of experienced and new members on the Committee, each Councillor is involved and the training is interactive. RDC Scrutiny Officer takes the first training session on the mechanisms of how the Committee works. The follow-up session is taken by the Scrutiny Adviser from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. • Training specifically for Audit Committee Members is undertaken most years, where appropriate. 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>3.2 Learning is shared with other councillors and where appropriate, with officers and stakeholders.</p> <p>What this means in practice There is a mechanism for the dissemination of learning materials; knowledge exchange; case studies; Action learning, to encourage Capacity building in the council and a Learning Organisation culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected members can describe how they have learnt from or shared their learning with their peers, officers and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint learning sessions – officers and Members (Licensing/Probation Service training May-June 2013). Planning training delivered by the Head of Planning and Transportation and the Planning Manager, which gives Members the opportunity to ask relevant questions relating to Rochford. Standards Committee training June 2013 – new style of training piloted, with production of a video ‘starring’ volunteer staff members. (Initial instructive learning session delivered by HLEMS and the Senior Solicitor, followed by the DVD as reinforcement. Members raised questions throughout the session.) Legal officers are available for Members to contact as needed. Copies of handouts emailed to those Councillors unable to attend training sessions. Monitoring officer training (Members and Parishes) Members recognise that training can facilitate networking. Annual briefing by the Leader/Chief Executive to all staff on the Council’s vision for the coming year, achievements in previous year and strategy. Staff who participated in making/starring in the video training on standards fed back that they found the experience rewarding and had gained an understanding of standards in public life. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>3.3 Investment in learning and development is evaluated in terms of benefits and impact</p> <p>What this means in practice. The council demonstrates that it periodically evaluates the cost and benefits of councillor learning and development and the impact that it has had on performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation strategy in place • Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on performance • Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities and are able to explain why their commitment to councillor development is worthwhile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation strategy in the Member Development Policy. End of year review to Standards Committee. (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13) • Post-course evaluation forms scrutinised by officer team and comments noted and actioned (give examples). Annual self-assessment forms - 73% returned in 2013. • Adjustments made to planning mandatory training to address potential weaknesses. • A Local Government Association 'peer support' programme of development was taken up by Cllr Mrs J McPherson, Portfolio Holder. Cllr Mrs McPherson has reported that the mentoring scheme was beneficial and provided a chance to see how another authority works and to forge links with another Council. • Scrutiny training involved the trainer observing a Review Committee meeting and then feeding back at a follow-up development session on the positives and where improvements might be made. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>3.4. Improvements to learning and development activities are identified and implemented</p> <p>What this means in practice Changes are made to learning and development programmes and activities to demonstrate the council's commitment to a continuously effective councillor learning and development programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meetings, reports etc providing examples of improvements to learning • Top political and managerial leadership can demonstrate continuous improvement in the approach to developing people • Elected members and their representatives can describe what has been done to improve development activities whenever improvements were needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Standards Committee meeting 11/4/13 showing implementation of mandatory Development, Licensing and Appeals training for Committee Members. • Changes to mandatory planning arrangements (Council 23/10/12, Minute 220) • More specific targeting of training to relate to specific Councillor roles, including training sessions specifically aimed at Audit Committee Members (6/10/11, Item 7, page 7.1/7.2) and Review Committee Members. (Report to Standards Committee 11/4/13, item 7, page 7.5) • Review Committee Minutes showing review of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) process, which resulted in DFG training being organised to take place in 2nd phase of training 2012/13. • Review Committee 5/2/13 request for a presentation on Emergency Planning. Members agreed that they would attend the planned training course in the training programme. • Review Committee has a role in budget monitoring and forward planning around Council's financial strategy. As a result, Review Committee Members advised to attend Treasury Management training 26/6/13. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

4. Supporting Councillors			
Elements	Specific Minimum Requirements for Charter	EVIDENCE / ACTION	BY WHEN/ WHOM
<p>4.1. Council provides an appropriate level and range of support as well as assisting those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>What this means in practice The council regularly assesses how it can assist councillors, particularly those with caring responsibilities in terms of suitable allowances and support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors Handbook includes arrangements that support those with caring responsibilities. • Top political and managerial leadership can give examples of how the council supports those with caring responsibilities • Members can give examples of how the council supports those with caring responsibilities • Elected members believe that the council is committed to supporting all councillors and particularly those with family and other caring responsibilities • All councillors have equal access to council premises, facilities and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution showing childcare/carer allowances. (Extract from Constitution – 6.1) • Independent Remuneration Panel undertakes formal reviews of the Member remuneration scheme. The scheme allows for annual amendments to allowances for travel expenses, childcare/carer. (Council 29/1/13) • Independent Remuneration Panel recommended an increase in child care allowance from 2011/12 to enable Members to use professionally qualified staff. (Executive 9/12/09, Minute 325/09 and Report, item 2.4) • Councillors have access by key fob to the offices at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh, which include an office with computers and office facilities, a Members' lounge. All Councillors have direct access to officer support by phone, email or at meetings. 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>4.2. Council examines how council business is conducted to allow for equality of access to key political decision making processes.</p> <p>What this means in practice The council regularly reviews how it conducts its business, in terms of when meetings are held and full access to meetings, so that councillors or potential councillors are able to take part in the democratic processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council diary - times of meetings include both day and evening so that members can discharge their duties in such a way so as not to sacrifice family and employment responsibilities • Feedback from Members supports an equality of access approach • Council diary - scheduling meetings takes account of cultural and faith commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable report shows that meetings are not scheduled for Monday evenings as this is when most Town/Parish Councils hold meetings. (Report to Executive 6/3/13 Item 9, 3.5) • All public Council and Committee Agendas and Minutes from 1 January 2000 onwards are available online on the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS). In addition, extracts from the Council's Minute Books are available for each calendar year from 1973 to 1999 inclusive. These records are fully searchable. • Timetable allows flexibility for scheduling additional meetings rather than having them scheduled (Report to Executive 6/3/13, Item 9, 3.6) • Council meetings generally held in the evening (Report to Executive 6/3/1 Item 9, 3.3) • Appeals and Licensing hearings and meetings of the Local Highways Panel scheduled for daytime. • All Committee Agendas, Minutes and Reports available in large print and in alternative languages, formats on request. (Example Agenda) • Hearing loop fitted in the Council Chamber and Room where most meetings/training are held. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>4.3. Council holds events for the community to encourage people to become future community leaders.</p> <p>What this means in practice The council actively encourages citizenship and publicises the role of councillors as community leaders as part of promoting local democracy and encouraging under represented groups to take up office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local democracy week action plan, programme of activities and review • Youth council • Citizenship links with local schools, colleges and universities • Prospective councillor events • Open days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information/pen pictures on each Member on the Council's website. (Example of pen picture) • Council meeting accommodation made available for Youth Council meeting and events, with Councillor involvement as appropriate. • 'Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council' produced for use by prospective candidates. This Candidate Guide provides prospective Members with information about the extent of the role of the Councillor and what is expected of them and may assist in the process of encouraging members of the public to become community leaders. (Copy of Guide) • Rochford District Matters (quarterly publication produced by the Council and distributed to all households in the District) has a 'Your Councillor' section, which shows Councillor wards and photos (Summer 2013 edition, page 6) Page 11 'Meet the new Chairman, in which Cllr Mrs Barbara Wilkins outlines her intention to visit as many schools and organisations in the District as possible. • RDC – Spring 2013 page 2. Residents asked to join the Have Your Say Group to express views on the Council's proposals and services. This group give the community the opportunity to tell the Councillors their opinions. 	
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Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Council delivered a talk on how Local Government operates and the role of the Councillor to local school pupils. • A school Council debate has been held in the Council Chamber. • Becoming a Councillor page on the Council’s website with information on the qualifications needed and the process itself. Related links include: LGA website, beacouncillor.org.uk, Electoral Commission (information on elections and becoming a candidate) • Chairman’s engagements include visits to local schools. 	
<p>4.4 Councillors are provided with development and briefings to enable them to understand and fulfil their role in relation to community involvement and its impact on their wider role as councillors</p> <p>What this means in practice Council provides development and briefings on changing role of councillor in relation to the local community and provides councillors with the skills and understanding they need to meet this challenge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing / training sessions and materials are provided on topical issues • Councillors are actively engaged in community leadership activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 2013/14 training includes a presentation by Essex Probation Service and a training session by Essex County Highways. (Member Learning and Development booklet 2013/14 part 1) • Senior Management Team are asked to offer courses to Members on current Council issues. • Twice-yearly public meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Police and Crime Commissioner – organised by Rochford District Council. • Attendance at Police Neighbourhood Action Panels, Community Safety Partnership. Portfolio Holder appointments on outside bodies, including Local Strategic Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Groundwork Trust, Essex Police Crime Panel, Youth Council. • Budget awaydays 	

Member Development Charter Self-Assessment

<p>4.5 Councillors are provided with the skills to enable them to fulfil their role as leaders of the organisation and the community</p> <p>What this means in practice Councillors are developed so that they can play a full part in the debate /decision making process around increasing organisational effectiveness, productivity and efficiency, including providing challenge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors can provide examples of learning and development activities to support effective decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New rules relating to mandatory planning training • Overview and Scrutiny training • The focus of new Member training • Budget awaydays budget training assists Members to understand the financial issues facing the Council • Content of Treasury Management training • Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) training for senior officers and Review Committee Members is held every 2 years. The Review Committee requested that a refresher RIPA training course be held for Review Committee Members in early 2014. (Review Cttee Minutes 9/7/13) • Cllrs Cutmore and Steptoe attended Essex Chamber of Commerce training. (email S Sibley 31/7/13) 	
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Member Training 'Direction of Travel' since achieving Charter status in 2010

The following areas are where the assessors suggested improvements could be made in the Member training programme delivered by Rochford District Council.

(1) The Councillors' training programme is well resourced and the assessment team felt that more could be done to assess value for money in the training and development which takes place.

Value for money has been a major factor in the decision to make savings in the training budget. Since the Charter was achieved in 2010 the annual budget for Member training has been reduced from £20,800 to its current level of £3,500. This has necessitated a much sharper focus on saving money (while ensuring quality is retained) and relevancy of course content to the aims of the Council.

Although we are working with a much reduced budget, we feel that Member training is still delivered to a high standard, in the spirit of the Charter. From 2011/12 there were approximately six fewer sessions through the year, as a result of not scheduling sessions in February/March. The February/March training phase was considered to be the time when least benefit would be gained from Member training. Councillors are elected in May and are offered a comprehensive programme of induction training immediately. This focus on training at times when it will be of most benefit can add to the value for money.

Another saving has been the use, where possible, of the Council's officers to deliver courses, as a result of requests from Members. This has the advantage of further improving the Member/officer relationship. There is the hidden value of Member access to information/advice from officers, arising from the training sessions, that is not confined to formal training sessions.

Savings on accommodation (due to all courses being held at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh) and catering (only teas/coffees, biscuits now) has meant that the majority of the budget is spent on the actual training, rather than peripheries. From the original budget in 2010 there have been savings with the disbandment of the Standards Board and the consequent savings paid in previous years for Members of the Standards Committee to attend the annual Standards for England conference.

Other ways identified of achieving value for money in the training budget are:-

- Joint Member/officer training where possible, an example being the Mandatory Licensing Committee course held in May 2013.

Item 5 Appendix 3

- Separate planning courses now held for Parish/Town Councils. In the current year two courses were held for Parish/Town Councils entitled 'Standards and the Code of Conduct'. A planning course was delivered in September by the Head of Planning and Transportation for Parish/Town Councils. In this way, information is tailored specifically for District/Parish Councillors.
- Member training costs are part of discussions at the November budget awayday each year when Members consider the MTFS.
- Course handouts are emailed to Members where possible. This has paper cost savings as well as savings in officer time.
- The Council is working towards the introduction of e-learning courses for Members. E-learning is potentially a cheaper way of offering training in certain areas of the Council's business. In partnership with the Vine HR Limited courses in subject areas such as Freedom of Information and Equalities and Diversity are being developed.

(2) The mentoring of new Councillors is strong and appreciated by Members. However, the assessment team felt that more support could be given to the Mentors to give them guidance and advice in their role.

Group Leaders appoint mentors for newly elected Members of their Party and involvement in this is currently not part of the officer remit. Group Leaders are aware of the documents that are included in the pack that goes to newly elected Members. The pack includes the Code of Conduct, timetable of meetings and a copy of the Member training booklet for phase one of the Programme, information on allowances, guidance on planning, a briefing note on the broad operation of the Council, a useful information guide, management team details, a Council phone list, A-Z list of Council services, the Council's Key Decisions document and the RDC complaints procedure.

(3) Independent Councillors would like to take part in a mentoring arrangement.

All new Members, including Independent Members, receive a phone call from Member Services by way of introduction and explanation. In this way, all new Members have immediate access to the officer machinery. Speaking to other Councils has shown that generally mentoring is 'Member led' and that political groups run their own 'buddy system', with Democratic Services as an officer point of contact.

(4) Councillors find the in-house training useful and appreciate how it helps to develop relationships with the officers. However, officers need to have senior management support as they need time to prepare for training sessions.

The delivery of training by senior officers provides value for money, although it is appreciated that it can be an issue in terms of claims on officer time. Obligations on officers around Member training are included in divisional work plans and as part of individual officers' MPRs, so the process is managed. At this point it is identified what their work demands are so they can be managed better. With fewer courses being held, the use of Council officers' time has been reduced. In addition, most courses are delivered by more than one officer; for example, the mandatory Appeals Committee training is delivered by Legal officers and the Transportation Manager, which splits the workload. The Treasury Management training held in June was delivered by two officers from the Council's Accountancy team. There is a gain to be had from an officers' point of view, as, because training is focused, potentially it will reduce the need for queries and officer time in the future.

Also, with the focus on working more with partners to deliver training, there is less time pressure on RDC officers. For example, there were training sessions delivered in phase 1 this year by the Essex Probation Service and County Highways. Licensing training is delivered by an external legal specialist.

(5) Some good work has been done with neighbouring Councils, which the Council could consider developing further and including more training sessions with other districts, partners and the County Council.

There has been a move to more joint training with Essex County Council, an example being the County Highways training delivered by Highways officers. In February 2012 the Public Law Partnership (PLP) invited RDC Members to a training event on the changes emanating from the Localism Act 2011. The course was held at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford and five RDC Members attended. In September 2012 the PLP held a Local Government Standards information event at Castle Point Borough Council offices. This event covered aspects of the Localism Act relating to standards and was aimed at Monitoring officers and Independent Persons of local authorities' Standards Committees. RDC legal officers and two Independent Persons attended.

In phase 1 of the Member training programme this year there were training sessions delivered by the Essex Probation Service and County Highways.

(6) The Council has produced a candidate guide and could think about holding non-political events to attract more people to become Councillors.

Civic events, including Citizen of the Year, which are held throughout the year, reach out to young people. In Democracy week the Leisure team works with the Rochford District Youth Council (RDYC) and Essex County Council on events to raise awareness of the Council and how Members/elections work. A debate/question and answer session was held in the Council Chamber in February 2012, which was chaired by the Chairman and attended by other Members. Members of the Youth Council asked questions that they felt were of interest to young people in the District.

Several teams from across RDC meet with the Youth Council at their meetings and the RDYC have also taken part in events and activities organised by RDC to help highlight their group.

There is information on the Council's website designed to attract people to become Councillors. This is shown on the 'Becoming a Councillor' page on the website. There are links to the LGA 'Be a Councillor' document, the Electoral Commission – information on elections and becoming a candidate and information on local government and becoming a Councillor (Local.gov.uk). There is also a link to the RDC document 'Guide for Candidates'.

(7) Councillors expressed an interest in more training around budgets, given forthcoming changes.

There are Member awaydays twice a year to discuss budgetary matters. The Review Committee is now responsible for reviewing the Treasury Management Annual Review prior to it being presented to Full Council. As a result of this new function, Treasury management training was requested and delivered in Part 1 2013/14.

Member Training 'Direction of Travel' since achieving Charter status in 2010

Continuous Improvement and Direction of Travel

The following areas were felt by the assessors to be particular strengths of the RDC Member training programme:-

- There is an embedded culture of Member training and development at the Council. The support for Member training came through clearly throughout the day. There are good processes in place to identify the Members' needs and developing relevant training opportunities.
- There is good top political and managerial support for Member training. The assessors were impressed by the level of knowledge about the Member training programme and the presence of the Leader on the Charter Implementation Group. Also the awareness of Leader and Chief Executive about the improvements that have been made in Member training and how this has been demonstrated in practice.
- The assessment team thought that the inclusion of Independent Members of the Standards Committee on the Charter Implementation Group added a valuable dimension to the Members' training programme.
- The training is well resourced with a separate budget for scrutiny. This has enabled the Council to hold double sessions of training (afternoon and evening) to allow more Members to access training sessions. It has also enabled the Council to hold a good variety of sessions.
- The feedback from the non-executive Members' workshop was very positive with scores between 7 and 10 (out of 10). All Members who attended were very positive about the Member training programme and made constructive suggestions for improvement.
- The induction for new Councillors is good, particularly the mentoring arrangements.
- There is a strong link to Council objectives through the training programme and this is echoed in the evaluation forms.
- The response to the self assessment questionnaires of over 80% is very impressive and reinforces the positive attitude and enthusiasm towards Member training.
- There is good flexibility of training sessions, as stated above they are held at different times. The offer of 1:1 sessions if a Councillor misses a training session is also very good.

Rochford District Council

**South East Employers' Member Development Charter
Briefing for Members**

Assessment Day – 14 January 2014

Contents

Member Development Charter - Background	5.35 - 5.36
Member Development Charter - Assessment Day	5.37 – 5.40
Example questions and possible answers	5.41 – 5.43

Member Development Charter – Background

What is the Member Development Charter?

The Member Development Charter is awarded by South East Employers (SEE) to Councils who can demonstrate a **commitment** to improving performance through the development of their Members. When a Council signs up to achieving Charter status it completes a **self assessment** against set criteria.

After completing the self assessment, the Council draws up an **Action Plan** to deliver improvements in its Member Development arrangements. To be awarded the Charter, a Council must be able to show a strong commitment to Member Development; a strategic approach linking Member Development to the wider needs of the Council; have in place a Member Development plan; and ensure that access to training opportunities is fair and equitable.

What has happened at Rochford District Council?

RDC achieved the Charter in October 2010 following recognition that, although the Council already set a good standard for Member training, meeting the requirements of the Charter would enable additional focus to be given to Member Learning and Development. The signing of the Charter in 2010 received full cross-party support. The Standards Committee continues to oversee the Charter accreditation process and the Committee comprises cross-party membership as well as Independent Persons and Parish Representatives. The annual programme is divided into two phases. The first phase, which follows the May elections, comprises mandatory/induction courses; phase 2 comprises mandatory/development courses. Working towards re-commitment to the Charter has been about continuing to improve the Council's commitment to developing our Members and hopefully, in this way, improve the benefits for individual Members and the Authority as a whole. In April 2012 there was an 18-month review of the Charter to monitor the Council's direction of travel. The Council passed this review. The budget for Member training has been reduced since the Charter was achieved in 2010, requiring an even greater focus on

Item 5 Appendix 5

achieving value for money in Member training. The officers working on the Charter are Albert Bugeja, John Bostock and Michelle Power.

The Charter, when awarded, has a life span of 3 years, which means that now is the time for the Council to submit details of how the Charter standard has been sustained.

The **Self-Assessment/Action Plan** and a **portfolio of evidence** will be submitted to South East Employers prior to assessment. These documents set out in detail the work we have achieved against their criteria for recommitment to the Charter. We are due to be assessed on **Tuesday 14 January 2014**.

Member Development Charter – Assessment Day

Who will be assessing us?

We will be visited by a team of accredited assessors from South East Employers. The team comprises one elected Member Peer, an officer assessor from another council and Mark Palmer, the Development Director for South East Employers, who leads the team.

Who will they be talking to?

The Assessment Team has asked to speak to key officers involved in the development and delivery of Member learning and development and will be interviewing Albert Bugeja, John Bostock and Michelle Power. They wish to speak to a range of Members - new and experienced - to determine their experiences of Member learning and development at Rochford District Council. The team will also speak to Members involved in the development and monitoring of Member Development processes (Members of the Standards Committee). They will want to see evidence of leadership and will be speaking to the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of opposition parties.

What will they be looking for?

Attached are a few examples of what the assessors may ask Members and be looking for in their interviews. The following headings relate to aspects of the Council's Member learning and development, with examples of how the Council meets the requirements of the Charter:-

Strategic Approach to Member Development – some key aspects

Independent Persons and Parish Representatives of the Council's Standards Committee are invited to all training sessions and places on training sessions are offered, where appropriate, to the Town/Parish Councils. This increases the opportunity of involving other elected Members in achieving the Council's priorities.

Item 5 Appendix 5

The Review Committee has its own training programme and a course specifically designed for Audit Committee Members is run most years.

The Council has mandatory training requirements for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees to increase Members' knowledge and improve performance. This year new arrangements have been introduced for mandatory planning training under which Members are expected to attend all planning courses (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 is no longer part of the mandatory training programme, but continues to be held annually.

A comprehensive induction pack is prepared and updated for newly elected Members and arrangements are made for newly elected Members to attend the relevant mandatory training sessions prior to a relevant Committee meeting taking place.

How are Members' needs linked to the corporate objectives?

- The Council's Senior Management Team (SMT) provides input regarding the courses considered appropriate to offer Members, to ensure that learning and development meets corporate objectives.
- There are regular meetings of SMT lead officers with relevant Executive Portfolio Holders.
- Mandatory training for Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees strengthens Members' knowledge of relevant laws.
- The Member development policy makes strong links with Council's objectives.
- Learning and Development booklets show the link between each course and the relevant corporate objective.
- The Member Learning and Development Induction programme (May-September) contains mandatory and corporate priority-related training.
- The request from Members that, where possible, Council officers deliver the training has ensured that the training can be tailored to meet the Council's specific needs and is linked to corporate objectives. There is also the

Item 5 Appendix 5

opportunity for Members to obtain 'follow-up' or additional information from officers on any aspects of the course.

How is learning and development led by Members?

- Self-assessment questionnaires, which ask Members for feedback on the previous year's training and details of their specific individual training and development needs for the forthcoming year, are issued annually to each Member, the results of which help to inform the Member learning and development programme for the forthcoming year. A 73% return rate for completed questionnaires was achieved in 2012/13.
- The annual learning and development programme is considered and determined by the Standards Committee, with a formal half-yearly review.
- Individual Members who wish to attend courses specific to their role can apply to see if this is possible within the budget.
- There are regular opportunities for Members to provide feedback on the learning and development programme.
- Group Leaders and Members of the Standards Committee act as champions for promoting participation in training opportunities, for example in Group meetings and in business discussions.

What are the main recent achievements/improvements that have been made?

- Different styles of delivery have been tried, including in-house videos, which have been successfully used to enhance the content of courses such as the Standards and Code of Conduct training held in May this year.
- Member role descriptions and skills for each post that a Councillor may hold within the Council have been updated. The role descriptions were agreed by the Executive as part of the Charter process in 2010. The use of role descriptions assists in planning Member development courses.
- A "Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council" has been produced for use by prospective candidates, as part of the Charter process. The Guide provides prospective Members with information about the extent of the role of the Councillor and what is expected of them and may

Item 5 Appendix 5

assist in the process of encouraging members of the public to become community leaders. This Guide is sent out by the Elections team to prospective candidates.

Evaluation

- Procedures are in place to capture and evaluate feedback on all training events undertaken by Councillors.
- End of event feedback forms are issued and results noted and acted upon if necessary.
- Six-monthly report to Standards Committee on progress of training to date.
- Annual self-assessment questionnaires are completed by Members to evaluate training held in the previous year.

Is there a budget for Member development?

Yes - £3,500 for 2013/14. Using the Council's officers to deliver courses frees up resources in the Member learning and development budget.

What areas are there for further development after the Charter?

The Assessment team will look at what RDC has planned when the Charter has been achieved. It will be looking for areas that can be improved from the position of what has been achieved so far in the Charter process. Suggestions from Members would be useful.

Item 5 Appendix 5

Example Questions with possible answers

<p>Do we have a written Statement and Policy on Member Development?</p>	<p>Yes, copies of the Statement and Policy have been placed in Members' lounge, office and library and are available on-line.</p>
<p>Do we have a Member Development Plan in place?</p>	<p>Yes, a learning and development plan is agreed and monitored each year by the Standards Committee. A booklet for Members is produced with details of all the courses for each phase of the Member Development programme.</p>
<p>Can you provide examples of training we have provided in the last year?</p>	<p>The following mandatory courses have been run:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Licensing • Appeals <p>Other courses include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex Probation Service • County Highways • Treasury Management • Standards/Code of Conduct <p>Courses scheduled to take place in Part 2:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Planning • Chairmanship • Emergency Planning • Media • Individual Electoral Registration <p>Induction for newly elected Members with Chief Executive and senior officers for a strategic overview.</p>
<p>Are you encouraged to share information from training?</p>	<p>Handouts are provided to those Members unable to attend a training session, which include appropriate contact details for further information on those courses delivered by Council officers. Copies of training handouts kept in Members' library/office.</p> <p>Parish/Town Councils are invited to attend relevant Member training sessions.</p>
<p>How do Members help each other to learn?</p>	<p>Members' input of personal experience/knowledge can add a different dimension to the training session. Members can also help to relay information to others within the</p>

Item 5 Appendix 5

	<p>training session. Discussion during the session and in the coffee breaks is often useful.</p>
<p>Are you involved in the formulation and monitoring of training?</p>	<p>Yes – the Standards Committee approves the training plan every year and monitors the training sessions throughout the year. The Standards Committee has 8 District Councillor Members. It also has 4 Independent Persons, which allows an independent overview of the training process and 3 Parish Representatives. It oversees the Charter process and provides input into the training programme.</p> <p>Self-assessment forms are issued annually to each Member, the results of which help to inform the Member learning and development programme for the forthcoming year. A return rate of 73% was achieved this year.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to provide feedback on the courses attended.</p>
<p>Do you have a role description?</p>	<p>Yes, these were formulated as part of the Charter accreditation process in 2010 and agreed by the Executive.</p>
<p>Is there a process in place to assess your development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-assessment and evaluation form is issued to each Member towards the end of each Municipal Year, from which the training programme is formulated. A return rate of these forms of 73% was achieved this year. • Post-course evaluation sheets are completed by Members directly after each course.
<p>Do we try and make training accessible?</p>	<p>Details of all training events are included within the Members' Bulletin that is circulated weekly to all Members.</p> <p>As a general rule, training courses are held during the day and repeated in the evening (to enable working Members to attend training).</p>

Item 5 Appendix 5

	<p>The Council has an agreed scheme of allowances that includes childcare and carer's allowances to support those Councillors with child or other carer requirements. The scheme of allowances is reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and agreed by full Council.</p> <p>Dates and timings of the main Committees and Executive are set annually. As part of the Charter process, the training dates for the forthcoming Municipal Year are provided to Members in January each year.</p>
<p>How does our training link with the Authority's wider objectives?</p>	<p>The learning development programme is designed to help the Council meet its corporate objectives. Each of the training courses is linked to a specific corporate objective and this is shown against each course in the training booklet.</p> <p>Officers can deliver training that is specific to the Council's objectives. The delivering of training by officers helps to cement Member/officer relationships.</p>