MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2012/13

1   SUMMARY

1.1   Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2012/13.

2   MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS 2011/12

2.1   A summary report of Member attendance at training sessions during the period 12 May 2011 to 22 November 2011 is attached as Appendix 1.

2.2   Details of Parish/Town Council attendance are attached as Appendix 2.

2.3   Mandatory training took place for Members of the Development, Licensing and Appeals Committees. One Member of the Development Committee did not fulfil the mandatory training requirement in Part 2 of the Programme and was removed as a Member of the Committee from January 2012 to the end of the Municipal Year.

2.4   In addition to the opportunities provided by this Council's learning and development programme, Members were able to take advantage of two Member Away Days on the budget in November 2011 and January 2012.

2.5   A Member budget briefing forum was held on 1 November 2011, using one of the designated Member training dates, to discuss the Council's budget for 2012/13. This Forum provided Members with details of the budget process, key challenges and implications, as well as an opportunity to consider Capital Programme items and matters to be taken forward and looked at in more detail at the Budget Awaydays in November and January.

2.6   A bespoke 'peer support' programme of development designed by the Local Government Association (LGA) was available for newly appointed Members of the Executive. This one-to-one mentoring is a developmental and learning technique aimed at increasing personal capacity, skills and learning. The Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care and Well-Being, Health and Community Safety took up the offer. A suitable mentor was agreed with the Portfolio Holder and the programme has been underway since the end of 2011. The cost of this has been met from the 2011/12 Member training budget.

2.7   An event entitled 'Localism for the New Councillor' held on 16 December 2011 was offered free of charge by the LGA to newly elected Members of the Council and was attended by one of the new Rochford District Councillors.

2.8   On 22 February 2012 the Public Law Partnership extended an invitation to Members to attend a training event that covered some of the changes affecting local authorities as a result of the Localism Act 2011. The course

was held in the evening at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford; five Rochford District Members attended the session.

2.9   The Review Committee has its own programme of training. Members of the Committee attended three courses in 2011. The first was an Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny at Rochford, run by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny officer. The other courses, run by Tim Young, an Associate Member from the Centre of Public Scrutiny, were 'Overview and Scrutiny - The Broader Picture' and 'Overview and Scrutiny - Developing Scrutiny'.

3   MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT – FEBRUARY 2012

3.1   In accordance with usual practice, at the end of the annual training programme, we sent to all Members a self-assessment questionnaire seeking feedback on the 2011/12 learning and development programme and details of any individual learning and development requests for 2012/13.

3.2   39 self-assessment questionnaires were circulated; 27 have been returned to date (a response rate of 69%). A summary of the responses from all the questionnaires received is attached as Appendix 3. Key findings from the questionnaire responses received to date are:-

- The vast majority of respondents found the training sessions very useful and answered that 'information obtained', 'the opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors' and 'ideas you could put into practice' were the most useful aspects of the training. Comments were also received that a training session can provide Members with an opportunity to discuss issues with officers. A newly elected Member felt that the induction training provided an insight into the role, expectations and responsibilities of a Councillor, and provided relevant legal information.

- In response to the question of where improvements could be made to the training programme, a comment was received that e-learning could be considered as a way to save costs.

- For those Members who found it difficult to attend many learning and development sessions, work/family commitments and having already attended similar courses were the most quoted reasons.

- As far as learning styles are concerned, most respondents found a lecture style of training the most useful. Interactive training, e.g. workshops/role playing/case studies, learning from others, e.g. shadowing/mentoring and visiting other authorities to learn from best practice elsewhere were also valued by respondents.

4   LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13

4.1   Members are invited to give consideration to the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2012/13.

4.2   When compiling these courses reference has been made to the requests received in the self-assessment questionnaires (see 3.2 above) as well as the post-course evaluation forms that are sent to Members at the end of each phase of the training programme.

4.3   The Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development on 5 October 2010, with our training programme being described as an example of best practice by the assessors, South East Employers (SEE). Charter status was awarded for three years, with the requirement that an interim review be undertaken in April this year via a conference call. SEE has asked that officers (Albert Bugeja, John Bostock, Michelle Power) and the Leader, Cllr Terry Cutmore, be present for the call, during which SEE will ask a series of questions relating to the recommendations that came out of the original assessment. The Council will be required to provide evidence that it is still meeting the Charter standard through the Member training programme and working towards the recommendations of the assessors. A short written summary of the progress made will be submitted to SEE prior to the conference call.

4.4   The Member Learning and Development Programme needs to be responsive to the corporate priorities of the Council, as well as the individual training needs of Members.

4.5   A plan showing all dates for Member learning and development in the 2012/13 Municipal Year was provided to Members at the beginning of the calendar year. This plan included specific dates for mandatory training.

4.6   Provision has been made in the 2012/13 Council's meetings timetable for training sessions to be arranged in two parts – mandatory and induction/refresher training in May-July, with mandatory/competency training in September-October (14 sessions identified in total).

        The dates for mandatory training in 2012/13 are as follows:-

        Part 1 – May to July 2012
        Tuesday 15/5/12   Mandatory Planning training
        Thursday 24/5/12   Mandatory Licensing training
        Thursday 21/5/12   Mandatory Appeals training

        Part 2 – September to November 2012
        Date to be advised   Tour of the District
        Tuesday 2/10/12   Mandatory Planning training

4.7   It is anticipated that there will be a need to offer Localism Act training for all Members in Part 1 of the Programme.

4.8   The Council is required to provide training every two years for key officers and Members of the Review Committee on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). RIPA regulates the powers of the Council to carry out surveillance and investigation. The Council's Review Committee provides a strategic overview of the Council's use of RIPA powers by way of reviewing the policy and considering statistical reports on usage on an annual basis. This training is scheduled to be held in January 2013.

4.9   The Guide for Candidates on being a Member of Rochford District Council, produced for prospective candidates standing for election to the Council, has been updated for the 2012/13 Municipal Year. The Guide provides information on the role of the Councillor and includes the dates of mandatory training in the 2012/13 Municipal Year. As well as being distributed to prospective candidates, the Guide is now available on the Council's website.

4.10   There will be circumstances where it is advantageous to both officers and Members to be trained together in joint sessions. This can provide a better use of resources in areas such as skills training and understanding new legislation. An example of this in last year's training was the mandatory Licensing Committee training, where officers from the Legal and Licensing teams attended alongside Members.

4.11   The Programme will reflect the decision of Council regarding mandatory training for Development, Licensing and Appeals Committee Members.

4.12   The May mandatory planning will be delivered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The course will cover Planning and Development and Housing and 'how developers buy land'.

4.13   An additional session entitled Introduction to Planning will be offered by the Head of Planning and Transportation to all new Members. This course will cover planning policy and planning legislation and all newly-elected Members will be encouraged to attend.

4.14   Monitoring was introduced last year, by way of a signing out column added to the attendance signing sheet, to ensure that attendees of mandatory training sessions are present at the training for the specified 2 hours.

Mandatory/Induction/Refresher Training – May to July 2012

4.15   Based on the above, the following Programme is proposed at this stage for the training slots identified from May to July 2012:-

        May   Mandatory Planning training
                        Mandatory Licensing training
                        Localism Act

        June/July   Health and Wellbeing in the District

Mandatory Appeals training
Changes to the Benefits and Welfare System and the likely impact the changes will have locally.
The County's Joint Needs Assessment conclusions for the District/The emerging Census data.

4.16   The Review Committee has its own specific programme, which is developed in conjunction with the Chairman of the Review Committee. Dates have been allocated in the Council's meetings timetable specifically for Review Committee training.

4.17   The learning and development booklet will contain details of the purpose and objectives of each course and who the courses are most suitable for. The booklet will also state that the training programme has been formulated to help the Council meet its corporate objectives and will show linkages between courses and corporate objectives.

4.18   In accordance with requests from Members, it is intended that the majority of the training programme will be delivered by officers, supplemented by external trainers where appropriate. Where possible, all training courses will be held in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.

4.19   It is proposed to continue to arrange the majority of courses in the afternoon and then repeat them in the evening. The aim will be for each course to last a maximum of two and a half hours, with a 15 minute refreshment break part way through. There may be occasions when these timings need to be reviewed in order to accommodate training that may need a longer session or where there are costs of using external training providers. Mandatory Licensing training, to be held on 24 May 2012, will be run as usual as one afternoon session.

5   **INTRODUCTION OF A CHARGE FOR PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL TRAINING**

5.1   At Extraordinary Council on 31 January 2012 the Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved with the inclusion of an income budget of £2,000 for 2012/13 under Member training, to be generated by the introduction of a charging mechanism for all discretionary training for Parish/Town Councils.

5.2   The current arrangement whereby Parish/Town Councils are invited to attend appropriate Member training events at no cost will be retained for those courses that the Council organises either specifically for Town/Parish Councillors or where the training is on a topic where it would benefit the District Council for Parish/Town Councils to attend.

5.3   In view of the above, the Committee is invited to note the introduction of a charge for Parish/Town Councils at those training courses that officers consider appropriate and to endorse a charge of £40 per person per session.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The cost of Member learning and development is met from the Member training budget, which is set at £8,800 for 2012/13.

7 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

7.1 It is proposed to continue to offer Parish/Town Councils places on relevant courses. A system of charging Parish/Town Councils for discretionary training is to be introduced for 2012/13 (see Item 5 above).

8 RECOMMENDATION

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

(1) To receive the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the Municipal Year 2011/12 as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.9.

(2) To endorse the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2012/13 as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.19.

(3) To note the introduction of a charge for Parish/Town Councils at those training courses that officers consider appropriate and to endorse a charge of £40 per person per session.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power or John Bostock on:-

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

MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY– NOVEMBER 2011

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Probity/Regulatory	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom		Optional	
					P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
Mrs P Aves		#	*	+	3	3	4	1	2	1	2	0
C I Black			*		2	2	4	0	2	2	3	1
P A Capon		#			2	2	4	0	2	0	4	0
Mrs T J Capon					2	2	4	0	2	0	4	0
M R Carter			*		3	3	4	2	2	2	3	1
J P Cottis		#	*		3	3	4	0	2	0	3	0
T G Cutmore	&		*		3	3	4	4	2	2	2	1
K A Gibbs		#	*	+	3	2	4	0	2	0	3	0
Mrs H L A Glynn		#	*	+	3	3	4	4	2	1	2	1
T E Goodwin					2	2	4	0	2	0	3	0
K J Gordon	&				2	2	4	0	2	0	3	0
J E Grey		#	*		3	3	4	1	2	0	2	0
Mrs A V Hale			*	+	2	2	5	4	1	0	4	4
Mrs D Hoy					2	2	5	2	1	0	1	0
M Hoy			*		3	3	4	0	2	1	3	1
K H Hudson	&		*		4	4	4	2	2	1	2	0
Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	&				2	2	4	3	2	0	4	1
C J Lumley					2	2	4	1	2	0	3	1
Mrs J R Lumley		#		+	2	2	4	1	2	1	3	0

NB   Cllr Mrs D Hoy was elected to the Council on 16/6/2011.
      Cllr Mrs C E Roe was elected to the Council on 1/12/2011.

KEY

P	–	**total number of attendances possible**
A	–	**actual number of sessions attended**
~	–	Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council
&	–	Executive Member
#	–	Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee/Sub-Committee
*****	–	Probity/Regulatory (Covering Audit, Appeals and Licensing Committees). All Members are appointed to the Development Committee
+	–	Members of the Review Committee

Appendix 1

MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATTENDANCES MAY– NOVEMBER 2011

MEMBERS	Executive	Cttee Chairman/Vice	Probity/Regulatory	Review Committee	Mandatory		Highly Recom		Recom		Optional	
					P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
M Maddocks	&		*		4	4	4	2	2	1	2	0
Mrs C M Mason			*		2	2	5	2	1	0	4	1
J R F Mason				+	2	2	4	0	2	0	4	0
Mrs J E McPherson	&				2	2	4	2	2	1	4	1
D Merrick		#			2	2	4	0	2	1	4	1
Mrs J Mockford ~		#	*		2	2	4	4	2	2	4	2
T E Mountain			*		3	3	5	1	1	0	3	2
R A Oatham			*		3	3	4	1	2	0	3	1
R D Pointer			*	+	2	2	5	1	1	1	3	1
A C Priest					2	2	5	0	1	0	4	0
Mrs C E Roe					1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
C G Seagers	&				2	2	4	3	2	2	4	0
S P Smith ~					2	2	4	0	2	0	4	0
M J Steptoe	&		*		3	3	4	2	2	2	3	1
J Thomass			*		2	2	4	0	2	0	4	0
I H Ward			*	+	3	3	5	4	1	1	3	3
Mrs M J Webster					2	2	4	0	2	1	4	0
P F A Webster					2	2	4	1	2	1	4	0
Mrs C A Weston		#	*		3	3	4	1	2	1	3	0
Mrs B J Wilkins		#	*		4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2

KEY

P	–	**total number of attendances possible**
A	–	**actual number of sessions attended**
~	–	Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council
&	–	Executive Member
#	–	Chairman/Vice-Chairman of a Committee/Sub-Committee
*	–	Probity/Regulatory (Covering Audit, Appeals and Licensing Committees). All Members are appointed to the Development Committee
+	–	Members of the Review Committee

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL ATTENDANCE AT MEMBER TRAINING SESSIONS 2011/12

Parish/Town Councils were offered places on each of the following sessions. The actual number of attendees is shown in brackets:-

Part 1: May-July 2011
Planning **(13)**
Managing Difficult Situations/People and Improved Impact at Meetings **(9)**
Local Government Finance **(8)**
Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct **(12)**

Part 2: October-November 2011
Planning **(26)**
The Voluntary Sector in the Rochford District **(2)**
Domestic Abuse/Community Safety **(4)**
Safeguarding/Equalities and Diversity **(7)**

Member Development Self-Assessment – March 2012

Total sent out   39
Total returned   26
67 % return

1.   In general, did you find the training sessions

Very useful | 18

Useful | 6

Could be improved | 2

Poor | 0

2.   What did you find most useful about the training?

Information obtained | 17

Ideas you could put into practice | 9

Opportunity to discuss issues with other Councillors | 13

Other individual comments:-

- Opportunities to discuss issues with officers (x2).

- Understanding of how the topics covered by training are relevant to Member role.

- As a new Councillor, attendance at the training sessions provided a valuable insight into the role and expectations and responsibilities of a Councillor, alongside the relevant legal information and implications of decisions.

3.   If you answered 'could be improved' or 'poor' to question 2 please indicate in which areas improvements could be made.

Course content | 0

Course presenters | 0

Style of course | 2

- E-learning could be used to save costs.
- Q&A/discussions can sometimes become a little irrelevant to the course.

4. If you found it difficult to attend many of the learning and development courses in 2011/12 please indicate your reason(s) below:-

Work/family commitments | 7

Already attended similar course | 7

Unsuitable course timing | 2

Unsuitable course content | 3

Other individual comments:-

- Other voluntary commitments – planned prior to Programme

Self-Assessment of Development Needs for 2012-13

5. What type of development opportunities do you think you would benefit from in the future?

Skills Development

Chairmanship | 12

Questioning Skills | 8

Dealing with the Media | 7

Public Speaking | 9

Time Management | 5

Speed Reading | 6

Dealing with difficult situations/people | 13

Core Briefing Sessions

Corporate priorities and strategic direction | 13

Budget process/financial management | 12

Procurement | 6

Performance management | 9

Risk management	15
Freedom of Information/Data Protection Legislation	12

Key Topic Briefings

Local Development Framework	17
Housing and Homelessness	13
Member Decision-making Structure and Processes	11
Equalities and Diversity	3
County Highways	12
Children's/Youth Service Structure	9
Community Safety/Anti-Social Behaviour	14
Emergency Planning	8
The Use of Social Media	4
Disabled Faciltities Grants	10

Other – please state:-

- Good to be provided with up-to-date briefings and the opportunity to discuss topics with other Members/officers

6.   **What type of learning do you find most useful?**

Lecture with PowerPoint presentation	18
Learning from others e.g. shadowing, mentoring	9
External conferences	2
Visiting other authorities to gain best practice	7
Interactive training, e.g. workshops/role playing/case studies	14

Other individual comments:-

- Dynamic learning, i.e. not PowerPoint.

- Shadow of job roles may be interesting.

- E-learning would be more economical. On-line lectures can include Q&A sessions.

7.   Additional individual comments

- Training by our own officers where possible.

- Keep up with new ideas and policies.

- Relate some of what's being talked about to the real-life examples that have happened in RDC.

- Too many people on the same planning course – maybe some could be split up to give everyone time to ask questions.

- The most useful tool in the box is an opportunity to informally interact with other Councillors and officers.

- It would be particularly useful to explore the relationships surrounding Member-Portfolio Holder, Member-officer and Portfolio Holder-officer.

- Members are often required to make decisions based on information that I know full well they do not properly and completely comprehend but may be too embarrassed to explore more thoroughly.

- Can we have a course that explores how to deal firmly but politely and effectively with the different character traits displayed by residents? I would like to know more about how to judge personalities and how best to deal with the various personalities that one meets.

- Course on the detail and impact of the Localism Act.

- Community Budget – the way forward.

- Health and Wellbeing – how the new Health Bill will impact and our role.

- How to encourage better attendance at training.

- All new Members would benefit from an induction training session on the Audit Committee prior to the first meeting.

- I like RDC officers delivering the training.

- I am pleased that evening sessions are offered.

- I attend every training session; they are too valuable to miss.

- Procurement training is important, not solely based on 'best value' but on social values to ensure maximum benefit to residents.