

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.
S60 2TH**

**Date: Monday, 10th September,
2012**

Time: 11.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21st June, 2012 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 3)
3. Recycling Group Representative.

Representative from Members' Training and Development Panel required (was previously Councillor Steele).
4. Member Development Activities - Autumn Programme 2012 (report herewith) (Pages 4 - 6)
5. Evaluation New Member Induction 2012 (report herewith) (Pages 7 - 18)
6. Proposals for Media Skills and Awareness Training (report herewith) (Pages 19 - 21)
7. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Monday, 17th December, 2012 at 11.00 a.m.

**MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
THURSDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Dodson, Sharman, Smith, Steele, Whelbourn, Wootton and Mrs. C. Cockayne.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Gosling, Lakin, Pickering, Rushforth and G. A. Russell.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH FEBRUARY, 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th February, 2012, were agreed as a correct record.

2. REQUESTS FOR TRAINING COURSES

Influential Audit Committee

Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Advisor, reported on a request for attendance at the above CIPFA course to be held in Birmingham in September, 2012, at a cost of £295 + travel costs.

It was noted that there was a similar course being held in Bradford at a cost of £60.

Agreed:- (1) That the request for attendance at the CIPA course be not supported.

(2) That attendance at the Effective Audit Committees 2012 update to be held in Bradford be supported.

New Councillor Roadshow

Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Advisor, reported that the above Roadshow, to be held in Leeds in September, was targeted at newly elected Councillors looking at LGA priorities, issues around the housing agenda, workforce issues etc.

Events on Community Budgeting are being offered at various locations, with the nearest being York.

Details would be circulated to Members.

The costs involved would be those of transport only.

Agreed:- (3) That attendance at the above be supported.

3. POLITICAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Tracey Parkin, HR Manager, reported on the new Political Skills Framework to support Member development published by the Local Government Association. The purpose of the Framework was to highlight the core knowledge and skills required of Councillors in the current climate so that development opportunities could be offered in the key areas.

The Members learning and development site on the intranet was currently being updated. It was the intention to use the themes in the Framework to group any learning and development opportunities. Members could also use the Framework individually to self-assess their skills to highlight where they might seek further development.

It was proposed that the Framework be adapted to be used in support of the Personal Development Planning and to categorise Member training. It was suggested that a working group be established to review the Framework consisting of a Member elected in 2011, a Cabinet Member and a Scrutiny Chair.

Following the review and design of Rotherham's Political Skills Framework, the model could be piloted with the Members elected in 2012 during September/October.

Agreed:- That the working group consist of Councillors Smith, Steele and 1 Member elected during 2011.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES - JUNE ONWARDS

Consideration was given to the activities that had taken place and the planned programme for 2012/13 circulated by Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser highlighting:-

- A detailed programme had been put together as part of the induction for new Members
- Development of a generic programme based on issues emerging from earlier personal development plans and matters arising from the induction programme including
 - Community Leadership and use of social media
 - Public speaking
 - Updates on legislation and new Local Government agenda
 - Questioning skills for Scrutiny
 - Chairing skills
 - Handling the media
 - Equality and diversity
- Recent induction programme had included sessions on corporate parenting, safeguarding and emergency planning
- Development of e-learning resources

An evaluation would be undertaken of the recent induction sessions.

Carol Cockayne enquired as to whether the e-learning resource could be made available to Parish Councils.

Agreed:- (1) That the report the report be noted.

(2) That Finance and Emergency Planning be included in the programme

(2) That a further report be submitted to the next meeting evaluating the induction programme

(3) That investigation take place into the feasibility of providing the e-learning induction courses to Parish Councils. A report to be presented back to the next meeting on a package for Members and Parish Councils.

5. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Agreed:- That meetings for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year be held at 11.00 a.m. as follows:-

Monday, 10th September, 2012

17th December

11th March, 2013

10th June

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2.	Date:	10th September 2012
3.	Title:	Member Development Activities – Autumn Programme 2012
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

This report asks Members to comment on the current and planned programme (2012/13).

6. Recommendations

That members:

- a. Receive this report**
- b. That a further report be submitted to this panel on the training and support requirements for Members in relation to the Disadvantaged Areas and Families for Change initiatives.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 The Elected Member Development Programme recognises the different roles of Members and the needs that arise with changes at a national, regional, sub regional and local level.

Members have previously agreed that programmes will be based on local priorities as identified in the Council's corporate plan and Members individual skills needs identified in the personal development planning process. The programme will incorporate a blended approach to Member Development, using a variety of methods of delivery, including bespoke training, e-learning and use of the Member Seminar Programme. This will suit the needs of different learners, as well as make learning more accessible to Members.

7.2 A generic programme is being developed based on issues emerging from PDPs and matters arising from the induction programme. These include:

- Media awareness and skills (see report on agenda)
- Questioning skills for scrutiny
- Localism Act 2012
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- New Standards Regime
- Emergency Planning
- Introduction to Local Government Finance
- Understanding Council priorities
- Health and well-being agenda
- Deprivation: the Rotherham picture

7.3 Dates are being finalised for these sessions and will be circulated shortly. Additional bulletins on courses or training will be circulated to members as development opportunities arise.

7.4 In addition to the above sessions, following a presentation on the Disadvantaged Areas and Families for Change agendas, the Improving Lives Select Commission requested, that the training and support requirements of Members (both executive and non-executive) relating to these initiative be referred to the Member's Development and Training Panel for further consideration.

8. Finance

All activity is funded through the Member Development and Training Budget. The majority of development sessions are offered in-house, however if specialist skills or equipment are required, an external provider may be sought. The budget is monitored regularly and depending on the level of demand or emerging needs, a further reprioritisation of resources by MTDP may need to take place

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Member Development Strategy aims to train and equip Rotherham MBC Members to take on the duties of the modern local councillor. Failure to put a comprehensive programme in place may limit the opportunity for councillors to develop their abilities and skills, which will in the long term, impact negatively on the effectiveness of the Council as a whole.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Local government has faced unprecedented change in recent years. The member development programme should assist Members to understand the implications of these changes and their impact on the Council and wider borough.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Member Development Strategy (2011)
Personal Development Interviews
Regional member development programmes
Evaluation of Induction Programme (10 Sept 2012)
Improving Lives Select Commission 11 July 2012

Contact: Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (01709) 822765
caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2. Date:	10th September 2012
3. Title:	Evaluation NEW MEMBER INDUCTION 2012
4. Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

This report gives details of the evaluation of the induction programme for Members elected in May 2012.

6. Recommendations**That Members:**

- a. receive this report and comment on its contents.**

7. Proposals and Details

A comprehensive induction programme for newly Elected Members was delivered following May's local election. The aim of the induction programme was to help new Members familiarise themselves with the authority and their new role. Following consultation with the MDTP, reference to the Member Development Strategy and feedback from members elected in 2011, the programme covered the following areas:

- Getting to know the Council
- Getting to know your Area
- Getting to know your Role

Out of the twenty-one elected councillors, eleven were new to the Council (or had not been a member for some years). This is the greatest number of new Councillors in recent years. Although this presented a very practical challenge to the organisation and delivery of induction and support, particularly in the context of recent staff changes, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Officers from each directorate were involved in the planning and delivery of individual sessions. The programme was designed and co-ordinated by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser, with assistance from Member's Secretariat.

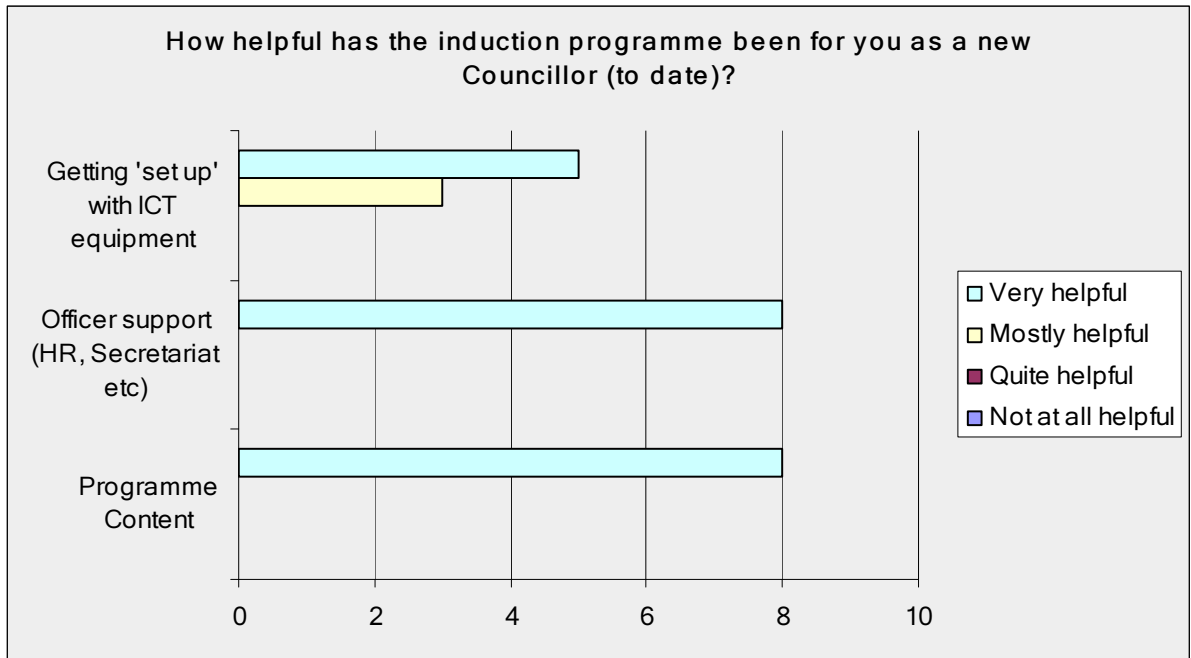
In order to improve the process for future years, an evaluation was sent to each of the newly elected members (attached as Appendix 1). Eight of the eleven new members responded (72% response).

The evaluation sought views on:

- How helpful has the induction programme been for new Councillors?
- Comments on individual induction sessions, content and officer input
- How useful was the input from more experienced Councillors?
- How helpful was the member handbook?
- What future training and development sessions are required?
- Timings of training sessions?
- If e-learning packages for Councillors are helpful?
- Is there anything else you think should be included in the current induction programme to help you in your role?

A précis of the responses to each of the questions is detailed below. These comments will be used alongside the broad issues raised in personal development interviews, corporate priorities and other policy changes to inform the Member Development programme.

7.1 How helpful has the induction programme been for new Councillors?



Feedback has been positive, with all comments being in the mostly or very helpful categories.

“The induction programme was very comprehensive, and more detailed than I was expecting. I can't suggest any areas for improvement as I suspect things about which I would have liked more information were covered in sessions I wasn't able to attend.”

Two comments focussed on specifically on ICT support:

“ICT should not offer equipment that takes 2 months to provide”

“Getting set-up earlier would be great - e.g. IT.”

On the basis of these comments discussions are underway with the ICT Manager on how the provision of equipment and support can be improved. Comments from Secretariat have also been sought as they have been directly involved in co-ordinating equipment and addressing members queries.

7.2 Comments on individual induction sessions, content and officer input

Further feedback was sought on each of the sessions, their length, content and officer input. Not all members were able to attend each session or responded to the evaluation questionnaire, therefore the response column may not accurately reflect actual attendance (for example 11 attended the welcome and introduction session but only 8 have indicated they were present).

Feedback on each of the sessions was positive with the overwhelming number of comments falling into the 'good' or 'very good' categories; none of the sessions received a 'poor' mark. Early feedback from a number of members requested that

additional evening sessions be put on to accommodate those members with day-time or working commitments. The programme was altered accordingly.

Each respondent was given an option of providing further comments on the sessions. These include:

"I thought that it was a well put together programme. I missed some due to work and a couple due to other commitments, but enjoyed the ones I went to."

"I found the IT handouts quite difficult to follow (a reflection on me I think), but Jean Tracey's one to one session was excellent, and I am now more confident with e-casework etc. Generally speaking though, the handouts provided a valuable resource which will be useful for future reference."

"Was unable to attend the last few sessions... hence it would be useful if any could be repeated especially the session on Local Government Finance. I thought the session involving meeting the Leadership Team/Directors was very useful but too rushed to take it all in. Maybe this could be broken into 2 separate sessions in the future so that not all directorates are there at the same time."

	Response	Session Length		Content	Handouts (if provided)	Officer input
		Too short	Just right	Good or Very Good	Good or Very good	Good or Very good
Welcome and introduction	8	1	6	7	7	7
Finding your feet as councillors	4	0	3	3	3	3
Getting the Most from IT	7	2	4	7	7	7
Tour of Riverside House	5	1	3	4	4	4
Meet SLT	6	4	1	5	5	5
How the Council Works	5	1	3	4	4	4
Managing your Casework	5	1	3	4	4	4
Health and Safety	5	0	4	4	3 (with 1 average)	3 (with 1 average)
Introduction to Planning	5	1	4	3 (with 2 average)	5	5
Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny	6	0	6	6	6	6
Safeguarding	4	0	4	4	4	4
Corporate Parenting	3	0	3	3	2	2
Time Management	1	0	1	1	1	1
Charing Skills	2	0	1	1	1	1
Knowing Your Ward	2	0	2	1 (1 average)	1	1
Local Government Finance Made Simple	4	2	2	4	2	2

It should be noted that all sessions were open to all members: Corporate Parenting, Safeguarding and Chairing Skills sessions were attended by both newly elected and more established members. The feedback from more established members has not been included in this evaluation.

Attendance was low at a number of sessions (for example time management and Knowing Your Ward), although often greater numbers had given prior indication that they would be able to attend. Where it was clear that numbers were not sufficient to make the course viable, sessions were cancelled and members notified accordingly. It has not been possible to ascertain whether poor attendance signified lack of interest in the subject matter (although anecdotally a number of members have said that time management would be helpful) or if the date and times were inconvenient.

In order to remedy this, more detailed descriptions of sessions will be provided in future programmes so members are aware of content and relevance. In addition, members will be asked to specify which sessions they will be attending in advance, so in case of low numbers cancellations can be made in good time as necessary.

7.3 How useful was the input from more experienced Councillors?

As with previous years, the programme included input from more experienced councillors, to ensure that their perspective and knowledge are reflected and communicated. All respondents commented favourably on this input, with half (4) stating that it was “very useful”.

Specific comments include:

“Always good to hear how others do things”

“It’s always good to know whose brain you are able to pick, but... more experienced councillors could have warned us about a) common pitfalls in the first few months and b) the fact that we were likely to be targeted by individuals who had already approached councillors but not received the response they were looking for. It would have been helpful to have been given some details about the ward “awkward squad”, and reassured that every ward has one!”

“They have a wealth of experience and it is important for new members to learn from them. Some sessions, especially the one about ‘How the Council Works’ by Cllr Lakin was especially good as was the session about the role of the Mayor”

These comments will be used when briefing members about the content of their sessions for future programmes.

7.4 How helpful was the member handbook?

All newly Elected Members received an induction pack after the election, including a member handbook. This provided information on the day to day running of the Council, the support services available and contact details of support staff. In addition, members were supplied with a copy of the Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) Guide for New Councillors.

Substantial amendments were made to the member handbook to make sure that the information reflected up-to-date organisational structures and Council priorities. The production of the handbook was made in-house to ensure that costs were kept to a minimal.

All responses were positive with seven (out of eight) responding that the handbook was “helpful”.

Comments include:

“I read this cover to cover and felt that it explained a lot”

7.5 What future training and development sessions are required?

As not all members were able to attend each session, a number of repeat sessions have been requested. These include: Local Government Finance Made Simple, Meet SLT and Corporate Parenting. These will be scheduled into the Autumn programme.

In addition, new member’s views were sought on what additional development would be helpful. Their responses are captured below:

Introduction to Licensing	2
Localism Act - overview	8 (100%)
Localism Act - implications for ward councillors	8 (100%)
Understanding Council priorities	6
Health and well-being agenda	5
Deprivation: the Rotherham picture	7
Speaking off the cuff	4
Questioning skills for scrutiny	8 (100%)
Equality and cohesion (Equality Act 2010)	5
Speaking to the media	4
Emergency planning - your role as a councillor	6

Other comments on training and development needs include:

“I think I would benefit from more IT training but appreciate that I can ask for this separately”

“I would particularly appreciate sessions on 'Understanding Council Priorities' , the Localism Act and Deprivation”

“I would appreciate a session on council housing allocation policy and the role of Key Choices”

Sessions are being planned on each of the areas outlined. Some of these may entail briefing sessions between officers and members on particular issues or subjects, or may feature as part of the scheduled Member Seminars. Where

members have identified an ICT development need, they have been referred to the relevant HR officer.

7.6 Timings of training sessions

As indicated earlier, a number of members had a very strong preference for evening sessions to accommodate their working commitments. By the same token, a small number of respondents stated that evening training sessions were not convenient. The majority expressed no preference. In order to accommodate working members, every effort will be made to schedule alternative sessions in the early evening. However, if external facilitators are involved this may not always be possible to accommodate.

7.7 If e-learning packages for Councillors are helpful?

In line with the blended approach to development adopted by the MDTP, members were asked if they were interested in accessing e-learning packages at their own pace and at a convenient time. All respondents responded positively to the question and will be contacted shortly.

An HR Officer with specific responsibility for learning and development has delivered one-to-one sessions with a number of new members to familiarise them with e-casework and other ICT systems. Feedback on her input has been very positive (see comments above). As part of the e-learning package, bespoke support will be offered to ensure that members are confident accessing modules.

7.8 Is there anything else you think should be included in the current induction programme to help you in your role?

No specific comments were received other than the following:

“Not really, but I would like to thank everyone involved in the programme.”

“No - it has been very good - and probably about the right pace. The evening sessions made it easier to attend.”

7.9 Additional Comments

In addition to the comments highlighted above, Member's Secretariat has also identified areas for improvement in relation to the following:

- clear guidance on options for ICT equipment
- changes to the information required on the New Members form in relation to car parking passes and other personal details
- issuing ID badges
- arranging an early session with officers from HR to outline tax arrangements, together with South Yorkshire Pensions Applications.
- creation of new webpage for each new Member and deleting pages of former members.

Action is being taken to address these points.

8. Finance

The cost of running the induction programme was met through the Member Development budget. All of the sessions were delivered by officers in-house, with the exception of chairing skills, which was delivered by a Local Government Association Member Peer (this session was a pilot of new materials so did not incur any cost to the authority).

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If there is no induction programme, new Members will have to learn their way round the council by 'trial and error'. Induction will allow Members to make an early contribution to the work of the council and so represent their local communities more effectively.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Ensuring that newly elected members are briefed and equipped to carry out their important democratic and community roles is no easy task. But it is one that needs to be carried out effectively if we are to build the skills and capacity of Members as part of our corporate priorities.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Member Development Strategy (2011)
Questionnaire to each of the new members

Contact: Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (01709) 822765
caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

1. Your name:

2. How helpful has the induction programme been for you as a new Councillor (to date)?

	Very helpful	Mostly helpful	Quite helpful	Not at all helpful
Programme Content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Officer support (HR, Secretariat etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting 'set up' with ICT equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any areas for improvement?

3. Which induction sessions did you attend?

	Attended	Session Length	Content	Handouts (if provided)	Input from officers	Request for repeat session
Welcome and introduction: including Councillors' Code of Conduct and standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding your feet as councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting the Most from IT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tour of Riverside House	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team/Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How the Council Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing your Casework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Safety – Personal Safety for Councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction to Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding Overview and Scrutiny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Parenting - your role as a councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time Management and Prioritisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charing Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowing Your Ward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Government Finance Made Simple	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other comments

4. How useful was the input from more experienced Councillors to your sessions?

- Very useful Quite useful
 Useful Not at all useful

Why?

5. How helpful was the member handbook?

Helpful

Quite helpful

Not at all helpful

Anything else you think we should include

6. Would you be interested in any of the following training and development sessions?

	Yes	No
Introduction to Licensing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Localism Act - overview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Localism Act - implications for ward councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding Council priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and well-being agenda	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation: the Rotherham picture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking off the cuff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questioning skills for scrutiny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality and cohesion (Equality Act 2010)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking to the media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency planning - your role as a councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other comments or suggestions

7. What time of day would you prefer training sessions?

Morning

Evening

Afternoon

No preference

Any comment

8. Are you interested in our e-learning packages for Councillors?

You can do these at your own pace, at a time convenient to you.

Yes, please contact me with details

Maybe - I need some help setting up

No, thanks

9. Is there anything else you think should be included in the current induction programme to help you in your role?

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2.	Date:	10th September 2012
3.	Title:	Proposals for media skills and awareness training
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

The report sets out proposals for media skills and awareness training as part of a wider member development programme .

6. Recommendations

- a. That Members receive this report and comment on the proposals set out in Section 7.1**

7. Proposals and Details

Many Members during their PDP interviews have expressed a want to undertake media training. Since the last organised training in 2007, several key factors have changed. These include:

- a high turnover of members, with eighteen new members elected since 2011;
- rapidly changing communication developments in social media, blogging etc;
- Government proposals to develop local television stations, with Sheffield being amongst the cities identified to host such a service. Should this go ahead it is likely that interest will also extend to the sub-region, with an increasing focus on Councils and other service deliverers;
- The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently announced that new regulations have been put before Parliament, coming into force in September, to extend the rights of people to attend all meetings of a council's executive, its committees and subcommittees. The existing media definition will be broadened to cover organisations that provide internet news thereby opening up councils to local online news outlets.

Given that Councils have to deal with increasingly difficult decisions about resource allocation and service priorities, it is likely that the media (and 'citizen journalist') will only continue to seek interviews to understand how these decisions are made. It is important therefore that Members are aware of Council protocols and confident with techniques for communicating with the public and dealing with the media.

It is also important for the Authority to take every opportunity to publicise where, despite the current economic climate, excellent services are still being delivered and to demonstrate where good practice, success and positive outcomes continue to be achieved for local communities.

7.1 To support this, it is proposed that a three tiered approach is taken:

Tier One: this is a generic awareness raising session aimed at all members (particularly newly elected members). This will outline how to handle press enquiries, Council protocols and some basic – do's and don'ts of social media. Approximate length: one hour, potential format in style of member seminar.

Tier Two: this will focus more on radio interviews or media contacts that are not held face to face. It is aimed at councillors who have occasional contact with the media (such as scrutiny chairs or area assembly chairs). You will practice being an interviewee presenting council topics or news items (for example a scrutiny review or community event). You will learn what the

media want from you and the types of story surrounding their 'agenda'. You will practice how and how not to answer the questions whilst making the most of what you have to say. Approximate length: half day. Numbers attending: eight.

Tier Three: this workshop will a range of relevant interview practice scenarios, based on real "live" issues. Course content should cover how to approach local press, radio and TV interview opportunities with confidence; simple preparation formulae and key communication and personal presentation skills. Practice elements to include live interview examples, group discussion, working in pairs and individual role-play exercises. This is aimed at senior members whose role may demand regular contact with the media or are delivering key messages about resource allocation or services. Approximate length: half day. Numbers attending: six.

Tiers one and two can be delivered in-house at a minimal cost, with repeat sessions if required. However, the advice from the Communications and Media team is that tier three is best delivered by an external provider (based on previous experiences) to provide access to specialist equipment and to simulate the media environment of being interviewed by "non-officers". Quotes are therefore being sought for this workshop. It is anticipated that it would be most cost effective if six members commit to this programme, with an estimated cost of up £125 per person

8. Finance

The cost of running these programmes will be met through the Member Development budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Member Development Programme should equip councillors with the skills to meet the challenges and changes in Local Government and communicate them effectively to the public and the media. Failure to do so may impact negatively on public perception and the Council's reputation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Ensuring that elected members are briefed and equipped to carry out their important democratic and community roles is no easy task. But it is one that needs to be carried out effectively if we are to build the skills and capacity of Members as part of our corporate priorities.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Member Development Strategy (2011)
Personal Development interviews

Contact: Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser (01709) 822765
caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk
Tracey Holmes, Communications and Media Manager