MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

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

Date: **Monday, 10 June 2013**

Time: **11.00 a.m.**

A G E N D A

1.   Apologies

2.   Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 15th April, 2013 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 3)

3.   Report Writing and Plain English - Outcomes of Elected Member Survey (report herewith) (Pages 4 - 10)

4.   Member Development Charter (report herewith) (Pages 11 - 13)

5.   Member Development Summary of Activity 2013-13 (report herewith) (Pages 14 - 22)

6.   Date and Time of Next Meeting - Monday, 9th September, 2013 at 11.00 a.m.

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
MONDAY, 15TH APRIL, 2013

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Buckley, Falvey and Wootton.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Pickering) and from Councillors Gosling, Havenhand and Steele.

18.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th December, 2012, were agreed as a correct record.

19.   REPORT WRITING AND PLAIN ENGLISH - CURRENT POSITION

Further to Minute No. 76 of the meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel held on 16th February, 2012, consideration was given to a report presented by the Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing summarising the key issues concerning the standard of report writing within the Council and the provision of information to support the role and work of Elected Members.

Members agreed that there was still cause for concern and that all report authors must endeavour to use plain English and be concise and informative. The Panel asked that a survey of Elected Members be undertaken to identify specific issues and how these could potentially be addressed, along with examples of best practice.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a survey be undertaken and the outcome reported to the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel to be held on 10th June, 2013.

20.   MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME- UPDATE (SPRING 2013)

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser describing progress in respect of Elected Members' training and development activity. The report stated that the development programme recognises the different roles of Elected Members and the needs that arise with changes at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level. Details of the current programme (December 2012 to May 2013) were provided.

It was noted that a full review of training activity for 2012/13 will be submitted in an annual report to the next meeting of this Panel.

Discussion took place on:-

: subjects for inclusion in the forthcoming training and development

programme for the Summer and Autumn months, 2013;

: shared training and development resources available from other local authorities in the region, which helps to reduce costs;

: Parliamentary Outreach - a service available from the Houses of Parliament offering free learning opportunities for local authorities on topics such as (i) understanding the work of parliament and the passage of legislation; and (ii) good practice sharing between Select Committees and local authority Overview and Scrutiny Boards;

: emerging issues (eg: the Government's welfare reforms; the community leadership role of Elected Members);

: Members' training in respect of the responsibility for safeguarding adults;

: Members' training in respect of the use of social media (eg: Facebook; Twitter) for communications.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That arrangements be made with other local authorities/agencies to maximise development opportunities for Elected Members, as outlined in Section 7 of the report now submitted.

(3) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel on the effective use of the member development function to support Elected Members' needs.

(4) That the following development sessions be included as part of the Summer/Autumn 2013 training and development programme:

(a) welfare reform (dealing with difficult situations; mediation skills);
(b) the responsibility for safeguarding adults; and
(c) the use of social media.

21.   **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser concerning the Personal Development Plan process for Elected Members. The report stated that Personal Development Plans enable Members to consider their own skills and strengths against:

- their specific roles and interests;
- broader Council and Borough-wide priorities; and
- rapid changes in Government policy and legislation.

This process allows any identified learning and development needs to be introduced into the training and development programme to ensure that individual needs are not overlooked.

Discussion took place on ways of ensuring the most effective use is made of the Personal Development Plan process, for the benefit of individual Elected Members and of the Council.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That all Elected Members undertake the self-assessment prior to their Personal Development Plan review.

(3) That future Personal Development Plan reviews for Elected Members shall be undertaken on a two-year cycle and on a rolling programme from May 2013 to April 2015, as follows:-

Phase1: Cabinet Members, Chairs of Regulatory Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Chairs/Vice-Chairs, Chairs of Area Assemblies;
Phase 2: Members elected from 2011 onwards;
Phase 3: Other Members.

22.   **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Members' Training and Development Panel be held on Monday, 10th June, 2013, commencing at 11.00 a.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2.	Date:	10th June 2013
3.	Title:	Report Writing and Plain English – Outcomes of Elected Member Survey
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

This report summarises the outcomes of an online survey of elected members with regard to the standard of report writing within Rotherham Borough Council and the provision of information in support of elected members. It makes recommendations based on those results.

6. Recommendations

- All officers to be reminded of the "Clear Communication" section on the intranet as part of RMBC's formal induction process
- All reports prepared for elected members should start with a brief, clear executive summary, and include a glossary of terms/acronyms used within the report
- A manager briefing on best practice around report writing to be distributed across the Council, with reminders of the key supporting documents available to officers
- Consideration be given – subject to cost – to the provision of awareness and skills raising for staff required to prepare reports through RMBC's existing schedule of meetings and training
- Directorates be requested to share good practice and to continue their own internal improvement programmes in this area of work

7.   Proposals and Details

7.1   <u>Background Information</u>

Communicating and engaging with others is a key competency for all managers within Rotherham Borough Council, and report writing is an important element of this. Reports are used within the Council to support the work of officers; externally to communicate the position or view of the authority to partner or other organisations/groups; to inform and assist members in carrying out their duties, and to support the system of governance through Full Council, Cabinet, Delegated Powers, Scrutiny and other elected member meetings.

Reports can be used to summarise lengthy issues; translate complex or technical information into a language and format that is easily understood by the target audience and put forward recommendations to facilitate the decision-making process.

In addition, the style and content of reports (including spelling, grammar and punctuation) can impact positively or negatively on the reputation of the Council.

 However, it is has been identified on a number of occasions in the past that the standard of report writing – particularly in the context of providing information for elected members – needed to be improved.

In February 2012, the Members' Training and Development Panel agreed that guidance be issued across the Council to highlight the need for improvements to be made – particularly with regard to the use of plain English.

In April 2013, the Panel endorsed the proposal for an electronic survey to be sent to all elected members seeking their personal views and experiences.

7.2   <u>Outcomes of the Survey</u>

All elected members were sent an electronic survey in early May, asking for their thoughts on the standard of reports submitted for their consideration.
20 responses to the survey were received. A summary of the findings can be found at Appendix A.

The main issues raised by those responding were:

- Reports too long
- Too much repetition/duplication of information
- Too many acronyms used (often without explanation)
- Too much jargon
- Too many officers are copying and pasting information into reports, without tailoring them according to the specific meeting/audience and the roles/ responsibilities/powers of those reading the report
- Recommendations and impact assessments need to be clearer

Particular problems with complex terminology, jargon and acronyms were identified in the highways and planning sections of EDS, although some respondents also mentioned Resources, Finance, CYPS and Social Services as being problematic.

NAS were mentioned as a positive example of report writing and one member said CYPS were much improved.

8.   **Finance**

There are no costs associated with the further dissemination or implementation of guidance through standard RMBC staff communications channels.

It is the responsibility of individual managers to use the guidance and in turn their line manager to performance manage against the key communications competency within the performance and development review process. It may be necessary in future to identify further mechanisms for improving performance, such as additional training sessions, with potential cost implications.

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**

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11.   **Background Papers and Consultation**

RMBC Plain English Guide
RMBC Guidance for Reports to Members

Contact: Tracy Homes, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, 01709 822735; tracy.holmes@rotherham.gov.uk

Elected Members - Reports

SurveyMonkey

1. About you: are you a

		Response Percent	Response Count
Cabinet Member		15.0%	3
Adviser to Cabinet Member		30.0%	6
Scrutiny Member		**55.0%**	**11**
Planning Board Member		10.0%	2
Licensing Member		20.0%	4
Audit Committee Member		0.0%	0
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

2. On average, how many reports are you required to read each month?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than five		10.0%	2
Between five and ten		**55.0%**	**11**
More than ten		35.0%	7
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

3. Do you read all these reports?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		40.0%	8
No		5.0%	1
As many as possible		**55.0%**	**11**
	answered question		20
	skipped question		0

4. Do the reports generally give you the information you need to make decisions or recommendations?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		10.0%	2
No		5.0%	1
Usually		**70.0%**	**14**
Sometimes		15.0%	3
Other (please specify)			1
	answered question		20
	skipped question		0

5. In terms of plain English, are most of the reports:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Easy to understand and free of council jargon or acronyms		10.0%	2
Fairly clear, but contain some jargon, acronyms or complex terms		**85.0%**	**17**
Difficult to follow, with frequent use of jargon, acronyms and technical terminology		5.0%	1
	Please give examples:		2
	answered question		20
	skipped question		0

6. Is there a particular directorate or service area where this is more prevalent? If so, please give details below:

	Response Count
	13
answered question	13
skipped question	7

7. Are there any specific issues on how reports are put together? (E.g. recommendations not made clear, reports are too long, text copied and pasted and does not make sense.)

	Response Count
	20
answered question	20
skipped question	0

8. Again, is there a particular directorate or service area where this is more prevalent?

	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	8

9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on how officers could improve the standard of reports?

	Response Count
	14
answered question	14
skipped question	6

Agenda Item 4

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Members' Training & Development Panel
2.	Date:-	10th June 2013
3.	Title:-	Charter for Member Development
4.	Directorate:-	Resources

5. Summary

The Council re-achieved the Charter for Member Development in February 2011 and will be due for re-assessment in February 2014. Changes at Local Government Yorkshire & Humber mean that any future assessments will be managed by North East Employers. This report considers whether further accreditation would be beneficial.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

6.1 Consider the benefits of formally seeking Charter status for Member Development.

7. Proposals and Details

The Charter for Member Development was first developed in 2004 as a model by which regional local government bodies and Councils could assess their management and support for Member development. The Council has been assessed against the standard twice, with the last assessment being in February 2011. The Council is due for re-assessment in February 2014. Previous assessments have been managed by Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (LGYH). Revised working arrangements at LGYH mean that they will no longer be able to offer re-assessment and any re-assessments would be carried out by North East Employers.

7.1. Assessment Model

Previous assessments have been heavily based around collation of paper-based evidence, with an additional day on site, supplemented by telephone interviews, as necessary. Review panels have consisted of officers from LGYH, supported by an Elected Member from another Council within the region.

The last assessment resulted in a small number of development recommendations, all of which have been considered by the Member Development Panel and implemented, as appropriate.

Given the changing nature of Councils and the work of Councillors, member development officers within the region have been keen to see the Charter approach change, both to reflect the new demands of Elected Members, but also to reduce the emphasis on production of documentation, and to focus more on outcomes, results and Elected Member perception.

The South Yorkshire network of member development officers has sought clarity from North East Employers as to their approach, although the response received so far indicates that the assessment would operate much as before.

7.2 Cost/Benefit analysis

The cost for the assessment would be £1,500. Additional to this would be the time commitment of officers in collating portfolios of information to provide to assessors, together with Members time in interviews.

The Charter framework is available for reference and could be used as a self-assessment tool, without external accreditation. This self-assessment approach is the model the Council has taken with respect to the Equalities Framework and customer service.

Similarly, the Council uses an internal assessment approach to the Investors in People standard, although maintaining an external accreditation element, to measure the Council against the higher performance requirements of a Gold employer (achieved in 2009). The Council recognises that in terms of its reputation as an employer, this additional accreditation is beneficial.

Members may wish to consider the additional benefits to the Council of seeking formal accreditation for Member development. As an alternative, a review group of officers and Members could carry out a self-assessment against the framework to identify any areas for improvement.

Should further information on an alternative model being offered from regional employers become available, this would be shared with Members for re-consideration.

8. Finance
Undertaking a formal re-assessment against the Charter for Member Development would cost £1,500. This would be taken from the Member Development budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is as yet unclear whether any changes will be made to the approach to Charter achievement and the response of other Councils in the region. It is clear, however, that officers carrying out reviews will be from another region and therefore not those who previously had a close working relationship with the Council.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications
Qualification and skills development supports the Corporate Priorities of providing quality education and opportunities to learn and contributes to 'The way we do business' by having the right people, with the right skills in the right place. It also supports the government agenda of raising skills levels of the workforce. Development of Elected Members also supports the Council's Workforce Strategy priority to develop Leadership though change.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

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                        HR Manager
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Agenda Item 5

1.	Meeting:	**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL**
2.	Date:	**10th June 2013**
3.	Title:	**Member Development: Summary of Activity 2012-13**
4.	Directorate:	**Resources**

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

5. Summary

This report provides an overview of activity in respect of Member Development over the previous municipal year.

6. Recommendations

That Members:

a. **Note the report and its contents**

7.   Proposals and Details

Summary of activities 2012-13

This report gives an overview of activity over the period of the 2012-13 Municipal Year. Member development is overseen by the Member Development and Training Panel, chaired by the Deputy Leader, Cllr Akhtar.

The report details the induction programme which featured prominently from May through to the summer recess. From that point forward, the programme was based on local priorities as identified in the Council's corporate plan and Members individual skills and development needs identified in the personal development planning process.

The overwhelming majority of Members (59 out of 63) have accessed at least one organised development or learning activity over the 2012-13 period[1] (not including attendance at seminars or other external events). Of these, 29 Members attended four or more sessions, demonstrating the commitment of RMBC Members to ensuring that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to undertake their roles effectively.

The programme has incorporated 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 was intended to suit the needs of different learners, as well as make learning more accessible to Members.

The report also details other developments such as regional/sub-regional working; development of the Member's learning and development site along with the Skills Profile and Learning Resource Guide.

7.1   **Induction**

The focus of the Member Development Programme following the 2012 election was on the induction of new members.

The aim of the comprehensive 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

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[1] please note: there is a caveat to this inasmuch as we only began to electronically record information from September 2012 – potentially more members may have accessed a session and their attendance has not been captured

recent staff changes, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Based on input from MTDP and feedback from Members elected in 2011, the programme covered the following areas:

- Meet the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team/Directors
- How the Council Works
- Understanding Overview and Scrutiny
- The Councillors' Code of Conduct and new standards
- Introduction to Planning
- Knowing your Ward
- "What I wish I'd known when first elected…" Learning the ropes – your role as a councillor
- Safeguarding
- Corporate Parenting - The councillor's key role as a corporate parent
- Working with the media
- Local Government finance made simple
- Getting the Most from IT: Emails to Facebook:
- Managing your Casework:
- Emergency Planning (deferred because of low attendance)
- Health and Safety – Personal Safety for Councillors:

Attendance at session was good with an average of 6 members attending each session. Where members were unable to attend, this was generally due to existing work or other commitments. When it was clear that numbers were not sufficient to make the course viable, sessions were cancelled and members notified accordingly.

A number of members had a very strong preference for evening sessions to accommodate their working commitments. In order to accommodate working members, alternative sessions were organized in the early evening. This practice has been built into other programmes. However, if external facilitators are involved this may not always be possible to accommodate.

7.1.1   Evaluation:

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 were evaluated as 'poor'.

Every attempt was made to involve more established Members in the delivery of sessions to ensure that their perspective and knowledge are reflected and communicated. All respondents commented favourably on this input, with half of respondents 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…"

"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"

Although feedback was sought on attendance and an evaluation was made of content/delivery, a formal evaluation of the *impact* of the induction programme has not taken place. The views of Members elected in 2012 on its impact will be sought as part of the PDP process. However, for future induction programmes a more reflective evaluation will be built in as part of the process.

7.2 **Generic Programme.**

A generic programme of activity was developed, covering core responsibilities such as Emergency Planning and Corporate Parenting, along with sessions designed to raise awareness of the impact of policy changes on the Council and local communities.

- Deprivation – The Rotherham Picture, Understanding Ward Data
- Welfare Reform: Dealing Effectively with Casework
- Localism Act
- Introduction to Local Government Finance
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Countering Child Sexual Exploitation
- New Standards 2012
- Corporate Parenting
- Media Awareness & Skills

Five sessions were organised using external facilitation
- Chairing Skills
- Questioning Skills for Scrutiny
- Media Awareness and Skills (interview skills)
- Faster Reading Training
- Emergency Planning for Members

Attendance at the all sessions has been on-the-whole good, however on occasions in-house sessions have gone ahead with very low numbers after members who have committed to attend, did not turned up. This has an impact on the quality of the session as it limits the discussion. It is also not a viable use of officer time.

7.2.1 Evaluation

All sessions are evaluated after delivery, although inevitably not all participants complete or return evaluation sheets. However, a good proportion have been returned and therefore, a judgement can be made about how the training has been received.

The evaluation asks for information on the following areas:

- Useful Areas:
- Session length
- Describe to colleague
- Improvement to Knowledge (1 = little, 5 = lot)
- How they will use the knowledge
- Additional areas to include for future session

All participants found areas of the training useful. Several of the sessions had skills practice or role-play built into the sessions and where these were offered, participants responded favourably.

Most of the sessions are two-hours in length although externally provided sessions are often a half-day. The majority of participants have responded that sessions are 'just right'. With this in mind, most in-house sessions will aim to be up-to-two hours long. However, in order to maximise learning with external provision, it is unlikely that session will be able to fit into the shorter timeframe.

Many of the participants responded enthusiastically to the question "how would you describe this session to a colleague?" A sample of responses is reflected below:

Deprivation: the Rotherham Picture:	*Very good, it's clearer now how to understand the issues*
Welfare Reform – Dealing with Casework:	*Very important to get the information; Essential training for all councillors given caseloads relating to this issue.*
Localism Act	*The presentation was pitched just right…*
Introduction to Local Government Finance	*A must to understanding finance; very informative and useful*
Public Sector Equality Duty	*Very helpful, informative and good opportunity to discuss*
Countering Child Sexual Exploitation	*Good explanation of the issues and current ways of working; very informative a must to attend*
Corporate Parenting	*Good overview and valuable; essential*
Media Communication Skills:	*Very useful although a little nerve wracking*
Questioning Skills for Scrutiny	*Good planning questions; Makes you think about how you prepare for meetings to get the best out of people*
Faster Reading Training	*Good – a need for all new councillors and old; fascinating insight into improving a key skill*

Emergency Planning for Members	*Really interesting and informative; worthwhile; thought provoking*

Feedback on all sessions has been positive. Most respondents indicated that the sessions had at the minimum, consolidated existing knowledge, with many indicating that they had learned a 'lot'. Although the evaluation asks how the Member will put the learning into practice, there has been little formal evaluation of how whether it has had an impact. There is scope however, for this to be analysed as part of the PDP process, asking members to reflect on any development opportunities to see if it has made a difference to their role, knowledge base or skills.

7.3   **ICT training**

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

In addition to the scheduled programme, Members have recently been offered the use of iPads and in order to maximise the effective usage of tablets, each Member has been contacted to discuss their individual learning needs, with bespoke one-to-one or group support provided as necessary.

7.4   **Planning and Licensing**

In addition to the sessions organised through the central Member Development function, both Planning and Licensing officers have scheduled regular in-depth training and briefing on changes to policy or legislation for Members on the Licensing and Planning Committees. This activity is not captured in this report.

7.5   **Leadership**

As with previous years, every effort is made to support members in their leadership roles by meeting their specific training needs (for example Leadership Academy or bespoke programmes). As greater expense is usually attached to these courses, we have maximised attendance at the LGA's Leadership Academy through its free places scheme.

Two newly elected Members attended the Young Members Leadership Academy with the Cabinet Members for Children, Young People and Families attended the Children Services programme, whilst the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism attended the Sports programme.

The learning and wider benefits to the organisation will be analysed through the personal development programme.

7.6 **Regional and sub-regional working**

Officers are part of strong Member Development Officer Network in South Yorkshire and across the wider Yorkshire and Humber region. As part of this we are developing a number of shared, sustainable resources which can be used and adapted by each Council. These are available via the Learning and Development intranet page.

In addition, officers are keen to share good practice and knowledge with other authorities, and to maximise value for money, share resources wherever appropriate. For examples places have were offered to South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat on the recent Faster Reading Skills course on a reciprocal basis and Social Media: Community Leadership. .

Discussions are also underway at a sub-regional level to utilize the training expertise of LGiU to deliver sessions locally. In addition, a number of free national and regional events are also being arranged through Local Government Yorkshire and Humber and the Local Government Association. Details have been shared with Members on an 'as and when' basis. These courses provide a value for money option as travel and joining costs are kept to a minimum.

Other resources have been developed including the Member Online Resource Environment, (M.O.R.E) website. This is a resource listing events, news, information and development opportunities as well as a space to network and share ideas and good practice with other members in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Although several members requested e-learning options, there appears to be little take-up of this facility although there are extensive resources available via the learning and development site.

7.7 **Seminars**

The Seminar programme is an important part of development programme. The contents of seminars are suggested by Members and are usually chaired by the relevant Cabinet Member. As can be shown below, a wide range of issues have been covered over the previous 12 months. Records of attendance are kept by Democratic Services, although the seminars are usually scheduled immediately preceding or following major meetings to maximise participation.

- Changes to the Right to Buy Policy
- Housing Strategy and Policy Consultation
- Waste update - Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Waste PFI
- Media Awareness - 'Minimising the Drama'
- Bike IT!: Cycle training in schools
- Welfare Reform and Changes to the Benefit System
- Warm Homes - Healthy People and Rotherham's Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Lessons Learned from the Child S Serious Case Review
- Local Government Settlement

- Emergency Planning
- Connect to Support Rotherham - website Demonstration
- Highways Agency - Managed Motorways Programme
- Unscheduled Care Review
- Budget: meeting the financial challenge 2013/14 and beyond
- Members' Skills Profile: - Learning Resource Guide and Learning and Development Intranet Site
- Environment and Climate Change Strategy.
- Sexual Health Agenda.
- Welfare Reform and Local Welfare Provision - The Rotherham Fund for Change
- Tram-Train: Sheffield - Rotherham – Parkgate
- The Francis Report.

7.8 **Other developments**

The panel agreed earlier in the year that work be undertaken to develop a self reflective learning toolkit as a means of identifying the key skills required for the role and those needing development. Using the LGA's Political Skills Framework as a basis, a Member working group developed a streamlined RMBC Members Skills Profile with the intention of being used as part of the PDP process as a self assessment tool to identify any areas for development.

It asks each Member to reflect on the key skills and knowledge required to undertake their role; pointing to areas of expertise or required development. Areas of expertise could be shared by peer mentoring, whilst the identified areas of development would be addressed via the member development programme.

The Members Learning and Development site has also been developed and the Skills Profile and Learning Resource Guide incorporated on the site. Bringing these resources together for the first time, the site also includes links to other relevant documents such as the Members Handbook, training calendar and links to useful website such as MORE. The site is also fully accessible on the Council's intranet which can be accessed by Members on their Council laptops (when logged in) or via the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network.

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.

In order to balance competing needs and make best use of the budget, MTDP agreed some guiding principles for the approval of individual training requests which incur a cost (either course cost or travelling):

- The development need should have been identified previously in a Members PDP OR be in an area that is subject to continuous change which the Member needs to be kept up to date in
- There should be no repetition of learning from a previous event attended
- It should be confirmed that the learning cannot be achieved by other no (or lower) cost means
- The event/session/programme should include a high proportion of actual learning.

The application of these principles will be taken through the PDP process. This will ensure that a consistent approach is taken to training requests.

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.

The Member Development function is supported by officers based in Scrutiny Services, with support from HR and Member's Secretariat. Although it is a small team of officers working across different sections, it has worked effectively to organise and administer an ambitious programme. However, it has limited capacity to respond to additional pressures. Should these occur, the programme or activities may need to be changed accordingly.

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
Member Development Programme:
Member Development and Training Panel Minutes

Contact:

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