MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

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

Date: **Thursday, 21 June 2012**

Time: **2.00 p.m.**

A G E N D A

1.   Apologies

2.   Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 16th February, 2012 (herewith) (Pages 1 - 4)

3.   Requests for Training Courses (Verbal Update by Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser)

4.   Political Skills Framework (report herewith) (Pages 5 - 13)

5.   Member Development Activities - June Onwards (report herewith) (Pages 14 - 17)

6.   Schedule of Meetings (report herewith) (Pages 18 - 19)

MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
THURSDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 2012

Present:- Councillor Stone (in the Chair); Councillors Buckley, Dodson, Lakin, Pickering, Sharman, Steele and Whelbourn.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gosling, Rushforth, G. A. Russell, Wootton and Mrs. C. Cockayne.

74.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER, 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th December, 2011, were agreed as a correct record.

75.   CIVIC HEADS' TRAINING SEMINAR

Consideration was given to a Civic Heads' Training Seminar to be held on 6th March, 2012, in Bradford City Hall. The seminar was aimed at prospective ceremonial Lord Mayors, Mayors, Consorts, Deputies, Chairpersons and Civic Office support staff.

Agreed:- That the newly elected Deputy Mayor and Mayoress plus 2 officers attend the Seminar.

76.   IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF REPORT WRITING WITHIN ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Tracy Holmes, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, presented a proposal to raise awareness amongst managers across the Council about the need to improve their report writing skills particularly with regard to the provision of information in support of Elected Member. It would complement existing operational guidance e.g. the Plain English Guide.

It had been identified on a number of occasions that the standard of report writing needed to be improved. Appendix 1 of the report submitted provided Managers with guidance on how they could personally improve their skills and referenced other operational documents which were also available to provide support. It was proposed that the document be reviewed and refreshed with immediate effect.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised:-

– The development need was not simply about the need to use plain language but rather about a number of questions to be asked before a report was prepared – outlined in the report
– A technical report e.g. Planning Board should include a simple plain English summary
– Expand the use of electronic means rather than hard copies

Agreed:- (1) That the draft Report Writer's Guidance be supported.

(2) That the guidance be circulated across the Council as a Manager Briefing

to highlight the need for the standard of report writing to be improved, particularly with regard to the use of plain English.

(3) That the guidance be included in the Member Induction booklet.

(4) That a report be submitted in 6 months on the perceived impact of the guidance on reports received by Elected Members.

77.   **DRAFT SPRING PROGRAMME - 2012**

Consideration was given to an outline Member Development Programme for Spring, 2012.

Based on the review of learning needs and the outcomes of the personal development interviews, Council priorities and other emerging issues, the Programme was likely to comprise of:-

Ward/individual
–   Case work/E-case work
–   Emergency Planning
–   Health and Safety
–   Chairing skills
–   Role of Councillors as Corporate Parents
–   Safeguarding
–   Ethical Frameworks
–   Understanding the 'new' local government agenda (localism, health, policing)
–   Role of Councillors as Community Leaders

Portfolio
–   Leadership
–   Finance and budgets
–   Familiarity with areas of responsibility
–   Understanding the 'new' local government agenda related to portfolios and leadership roles

Overview and Scrutiny Select Commissions
–   Chairing meetings
–   Effective questioning
–   Localism
–   Finance
–   Health Reforms
–   Performance management and self-regulation
–
–   Regulatory
–   Updates on new Legislation/developments relevant to:-
    Licensing
    Planning
    Standards
    Audit Committee

Partnership
- Representation on other bodies
- Working in the community

ICT and inter-personal skills
- New forms of media and electronic communications
- Utilisation of all forms of technology
- Social media and community leadership
- Handling the media/public speaking
- Handling difficult situations

Discussion took place on the need for Members to have an understanding of Health and Wellbeing and Public Health agendas.

Agreed:- (1) That the proposed Spring programme 2012 be agreed.

(2) That workshops on the changing Health and Well-Being and Public Health agenda be organised.

(3) That a further report be submitted to the next meeting.

78. NEW MEMBER INDUCTION 2012

Consideration was given to the draft Members' Induction Programme circulated by Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser.

The aim of the induction programme was to help new Members familiarise themselves with the Authority and their new role and covered 3 main areas:-

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

As in previous years, Lead Members would be invited to make an input to the relevant sessions.

Alongside 'in-house' programme the LGA was planning a 'New Councillor Roadshow'. Details were to be confirmed but likely to be regional events in July or September.

Agreed:- (1) That the information be noted and the draft programme be approved.

(2) That the timetable be circulated when completed.

79. OVERVIEW OF TRAINING ACTIVITY 2011- 12

Consideration was given to the Member Development and Training activity that had taken place since May, 2011, which included:-

- Refresher training on fraud and corruption
- Local Development Framework
- New Localism

- Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding (Children)
- Safeguarding (Adult)
- E-Casework
- Health and Safety
- Project Argus

Unfortunately few evaluation forms had been received, therefore, difficult to judge the effectiveness of the courses on offer. However, informal feedback and comments given in Personal Development Plans had been largely favourable.

The majority of Members (approximately 69 out of 63) had taken up at least 1 organised training or development opportunity since May, 2011 with many Members attending multiple courses. This did not take account of e-learning, information sessions with officers or attendance at Member Seminars.

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Agreed:- That the report be noted.

80.   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(1) Conferences
A free regional conference entitled "Think Local Act Personal" was to be held on 30ᵗʰ March, 2012.

Agreed:- That details be supplied to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Cabinet Member and advisors for Health and Wellbeing and the Health Select Commission.

A LGA Housing and Planning Master Class to be held on 15ᵗʰ March, 2012. Details had been supplied to members for expressions of interest.

(2) Dates/Times of Meetings

Agreed:- That consideration be given to the date and time of meetings during the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

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

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 26th April, 2012 at 2.00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Agenda Item 4

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Members' Training & Development Panel
2.	Date:-	Thursday 21st June 2012
3.	Title:-	Political Skills Framework
4.	Directorate:-	Resources

5. Summary

Local Government Association has just published a new Political Skills Framework to support Member development. This report proposes a way forward to implement a framework tailored for the Council.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Agree the establishment of a working group and pilot of an Elected Member Skills Framework for Rotherham.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Political Skills Framework

The Local Government Association (LGA) has just published a new Political Skills Framework (May 2012), which is attached at Appendix 1. The purpose of the framework is to highlight the core knowledge and skills required of Councillors in the current climate, so that development opportunities can be offered in these key areas.

The Members learning and development site on the intranet is currently being updated and it is intended to use the themes in the Political Skills Framework to group any learning & development opportunities.

Members can also use the framework individually to self-assess their skills (as part of the PDP process) to highlight where they might seek further development.

The framework has been updated for 2012 to reflect the new demands on Members from the Localism agenda, the economic climate and changes in technology and social media. There are six core skill areas:

- Local Leadership – engaging with communities to facilitate a vision for the locality
- Partnership working – building relationships with colleagues, officers, community groups and organisations
- Communication – listening, appropriate language, dealing with the media
- Political understanding – promoting a political vision, encouraging public engagement, working across political boundaries with political integrity
- Scrutiny & Challenge – critical friend, constructive challenge & feed back, analysis of information and presentation of clear arguments
- Regulating and monitoring – legal responsibilities and protocols

In 2011 skills profiles were introduced in the Council for all officers, to be used in Performance & Development Reviews in a similar way. These have been tailored to the different levels of officers throughout the organisation and reflect the requirements of officers in the pay and grading scheme. An example of an officer skills profile is attached at Appendix 2.

7.2 Pilot of framework

In order to encourage Members to consider their own development needs, it is suggested that the framework be adapted to be used in support of the PDP process and to categorise Member training.

The framework could be shortened and tailored to reflect Rotherham's needs. To do this, Panel may wish to consider a working group to review the

framework with officers. The working group could include a Member elected in 2011, Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair.

Following this review and design of Rotherham's political skills framework, the model could be piloted with those new Members elected in 2012. The aim would be to pilot the framework in September/October, when new Members have had time to adjust to their new roles and be in a position to self-assess.

An evaluation of the pilot would then be reported back to panel in autumn, to support the content of the autumn programme and for use in next year's PDPs.

8. Finance
Development of the political skills framework would be undertaken in-house, so incurs no additional costs, other than officer and Member time.

9. Risks and Uncertainties
Members will need to feel that the framework is appropriate and relevant. The review of the framework by a working group seeks to ensure the content is considered appropriate in the local context. Any framework needs to be short and concise. The working group will look to shorten and simplify the framework to make it easy and quick to use.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications
Development of Members enables them to carry out their respective roles and help keep Members updated on national and local policy issues. Having a skills framework to highlight knowledge and skills provides focus to development.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Appendix 1 – National Political Skills Framework
Appendix 2 – Example Officer Skills Profile

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Political Skills Framework Extract   **Appendix 1**

Improvement

Local Government Association

The Political Skills Framework
a councillor's toolkit

Six core skills for councillors

There are six core skill areas for all councillors, then two more for cabinet members (Providing Vision and Managing Performance) and a further skill area for Leaders (Excellence in Leadership) These skills sets are referred to but not specifically outlined in this document- This tool-kit focuses on the first six core skill areas that are relevant for all councillors:

Local leadership
This refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.

Partnership working
This aspect of the councillor role focuses on the need to build good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

Communication skills
This skill area recognises the need for councillors need to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.

Political understanding
This skill set recognises the need for councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision, and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. It recognises that councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.

Scrutiny and challenge
Scrutiny and challenge is an important day-to-day aspect of the councillor role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside the council, and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.

Regulating and monitoring
This skill set relates to the more judicial aspects of the role that require councillors to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.

Local leadership

"People can elect their councillor confident in the knowledge that they will be able to act on the issues they care about and have campaigned on."

(A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, November 2011, p.5)

Positive

✓ Engages with their community, canvasses opinion and looks for new ways of representing people

✓ Keeps up-to-date with local concerns by drawing information from diverse sources, including hard to reach groups

✓ Encourages trust and respect by being approachable, empathising and finding new ways to engage with others

✓ Creates partnerships with different sections and groups in the community and ensures their involvement in decision-making

✓ Mediates fairly and constructively between people and groups with conflicting needs

✓ Works with others to develop and champion a shared local vision

Negative

✗ Doesn't engage with their community, waits to be approached and is difficult to contact

✗ Maintains a low public profile, not easily recognised in their community

✗ Treats groups or people unequally, fails to build integration or cohesion

✗ Has a poor understanding of local concerns and how these might be addressed

✗ Concentrates on council processes rather than people

✗ Is unrealistic about what they can achieve and fails to deliver on promises

Political Skills Framework Extract   **Appendix 1**

Self reflective learning

How do I see myself as a ward member?

What do you think are your particular strengths? (eg, what do you bring to the role of councillor that you think is particularly good?)	Prompts… How is my role changing and what is driving that change What sections of my community have I engaged with and canvassed opinion? How have I looked for new ways of representing people? How up-to-date am I on local concerns? Would others see me as approachable? Who have I built partnerships with? When did I last act as a mediator? How do I champion others' needs?
Can you illustrate these strengths by writing down examples of things you think you have done well over the past year?	
In which of these areas would you like to improve and how?	

Skills Profile
Band I (M2 Manager)

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Skill/Competency Ratings 1.= Excellent, 2.= Very Good, 3.= Good, 4.= Area for Development, 5.= Unsatisfactory	Rating 1-5
Know-how - Level 6	
Carries out the working practices, procedures and advanced theories across a specialist area, or an equivalent level of organisational policy and procedures	
Uses knowledge of Safety, Health and Environmental policies, procedures and regulations, including risk in own area and/or across other areas of work	
Utilises a range of ICT systems across own work area	
Keeps costs within agreed levels for own section/team	
Uses, interprets, analyses and communicates more complex numerical information	
Level 7 qualification e.g. Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas, or Level 6 qualification e.g. Bachelor Degrees, Graduate Certificates and Diplomas; *plus* post qualifying experience **Or** Evidence of the equivalent level of knowledge gained through work experience	
Communication Skills - Level 4	
Exchanges complicated or sensitive information with a range of people, orally and in writing	
Communicates and persuades groups of people and deals with various points of view effectively	
Produces non-standard documents using varied and creative styles to suit the needs of the audience	
Decision Making Skills - Level 5	
Makes decisions as to how to operate within own work area	
Deals with a degree of uncertainty in making decisions where some facts may not be known	

Problem Solving Skills - Level 5	
Uses an analytical approach to solve complex situations or problems	
Analyses and interprets varied and complex information from several sources	
Uses lateral or creative problem solving where there is little precedence to draw on	
Produces long-term solutions and strategies	
Manager Competencies	
Strategic Awareness: Sees the wider picture and works in a joined up way with others	
Leadership: Gives direction to others and leads by example	
Performance Focus: Works to deliver continuous improvement of services	
Customer Awareness: Works in partnership with others to meet customer needs and expectations	
Dignity and Respect: Promotes equality, and treats all people fairly and with dignity and respect	
Managing With and Through People: Builds and maintains constructive and open working relationships with others	
Communicating and Engaging with Others: Communicates facts, ideas and proposals to others clearly and persuasively	

Click Here for a further breakdown of the Manager Skills & Competencies Framework

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2.	Date:	21st June 2012
3.	Title:	Member Development Activities – June onwards
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 and comment on the current and planned programme for 2012-13**

b. **Receive a further report on progress to its next meeting**

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 detailed programme was put together as part of the induction for new members (which was circulated and open to all members). This has been developed and

delivered using in-house officer resources. This has meant that a minimal demand has been placed on the Member Development budget. (Please note that a report outlining the evaluation of the induction programme will be submitted to the Panel's next meeting.)

7.3   An initial round of personal development interviews took place in Autumn 2011, focussing on members elected last year. Interviews with those elected in 2012 are now being scheduled.

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

- community leadership and use of social media (scheduled for July 2012)
- public speaking
- updates on legislation and new Local Government agenda (eg Localism Act and Health and Social Care Act and Welfare Reform)
- questioning skills for scrutiny
- chairing skills (scheduled for 19 June)
- handling the media
- equality and diversity

Dates are to be confirmed and will be circulated to members in due course.

7.4   In addition, the recent induction programme has included sessions on the three recommended areas for mandatory training for members;

- corporate parenting
- safeguarding (adult and children)
- emergency planning (to be rescheduled)

It is likely that repeat sessions will be run on each of these areas later in the year.

7.5   As well as face-to-face delivery, officers are developing e-learning resources. This includes access to modules on:

- induction
- community
- leadership
- media

A member web-page is being developed on the intranet which will link these modules to other resources including the regional 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.

An update on e-learning will be provided to the next meeting of this panel.

7.6   Additional bulletins on courses or training have been circulated to members as

development opportunities have arisen. This includes events supported by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme, either on a regional or sub-regional basis arise (for example Community Leadership and use of Social Media) as well as offers of places on courses organised by other authorities or bodies. These courses provide a value for money option as travel and joining costs are kept to a minimum. Details of current local courses are attached as Appendix 1.

7.7   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, requests will be brought to this Panel for approval, in order that a decision can be made based on the availability of resources and existing member development priorities (or in the interim, to the Chair for his decision).

8.   Finance

All activity is funded through the Member Development and Training Budget. 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

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Appendix 1

York City Council

Speaking in Public and Effective Presentations'.

Wednesday 27th June from **2pm** to **4.30pm** at **The Guildhall, York, YO1 9QN**. The course is also open to Members in other Local Authorities across the Region at a cost of £50 per head.

Bradford City Council

Wednesday 27th June ((16.00-18.00) Ian Fifield is presenting on **Effective Audit Committees 2012** update, which will look at how the Audit Committee can add value in these challenging times (£60 per head)

Tuesday 3rd July the third Leeds Bradford **Planning series** (09.30.13.30) will take place, this interactive, modular programme for Planning Committee Members will focus on Planning reform-the latest, Conservation and Heritage and will also have a module for Members new to Planning Committee. A great networking opportunity and supportive materials/handouts (£85)

30th October (17.30-19.30) we have an event for all Members on **Safeguarding Adults and Children.** Working with a leading drama company-Collingwood Learning we will equip Members across the region with the awareness and knowledge to identfiy and respond effectively to a safeguarding issue. (£60)

Leeds City Council FREE

Investing in Local Economic Growth – Workshop for Lead Councillors
10am-4pm, Monday 2nd July 2012, Well Met Conference, Leeds
The session will explore:
- new relationships, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- new financial mechanisms available to councils
- improving people's skills to compete in a global economy (rather than a concentration on physical regeneration programmes).
- how councils to create the conditions for local economic growth

South Yorkshire Secretariat (on behalf of South Yorkshire Councils) FREE
Being an Effective Community Leader" (including Social Media)
Wednesday 11 July 2012, 1.00 – 4.00 pm (Lunch 12.30 pm)
The session will explore
- What the Localism Act means for you as an Elected Member.
- The growing role for Members as leaders within a local area.
- How digital tools (social media etc) can be used to help Members deal with issues within their own communities.
- Help Members to raise their profile and, more importantly, help save them time.

Agenda Item 6

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS		

1.	Meeting:	**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL**
2.	Date:	**21st June 2012**
3.	Title:	**Scheduling of meetings**
4.	Directorate:	**Resources**

5. Summary

This report asks Members to agree a new meeting schedule.

6. Recommendations

That members:

a. **Agree that the MDTP meets quarterly**

b. **Monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements in 12 months**

7.   Proposals and Details

7.1   The panel is asked to consider moving from bi-monthly to quarterly meetings. The suggested dates and times of meetings are as follows:

- Monday 10th September 2012   starting at 11.00am
- Monday 17th December 2012   (as above)
- Monday 11th March 2013   (as above)
- Monday 10th June 2013   (as above)

7.2   If approved, it is suggested that the effectiveness of these arrangements are reviewed in 12 months to judge if they are fit for purpose and to ensure the strategic role of the panel is not undermined.

8.   Finance

Should the recommendations be accepted, the changes proposed in this paper will make savings. These have yet to be costed but are likely to mean greater efficiencies in the use of officer resources, fewer formal meetings and a reduction in the associated production and distributions costs for agendas.

9.   Risks and Uncertainties

The panel is currently supported by officers from Scrutiny Services and Democratic Services. Both teams have experienced substantial reductions in capacity over the previous year. The proposal to move to quarterly meetings would make the workload more manageable.

10.   Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

10.1   This panel has the strategic overview of how training and development resources are directed to support the different roles of Members and the needs that arise with changes at a national, regional, sub regional and local level, based on priorities as identified in the Council's corporate plan.

11.   Background Papers and Consultation

Deputy Leader

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