

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT &amp; TRAINING PANEL</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> February 2012</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Initial overview of training activity</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

**5. Summary**

This report asks Members to note the member development and training activity since May 2011

**6. Recommendations**

- a. That Members note the report and comment on activity to date**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

7.1 Since May 2011 the following generic courses have been offered:

- Refresher Training on Fraud and Corruption
- Local Development Framework
- New Localism
- Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding (Children)
- Safeguarding (Adult)
- e-Casework
- Health & Safety
- Project Argus

7.2 Many of these courses were run over repeated sessions (often at different times of the day to accommodate members with either working or caring commitments). Consequently, take-up over the multiple sessions has been good, particularly with corporate parenting, Project Argus and Localism briefings.

7.3 Unfortunately, relatively few evaluation forms have been received; despite feedback being sought after each session. It is difficult therefore to use these to judge the effectiveness of the courses on offer. However, informal feedback and comments given in PDPs have been largely favourable. Where there are clear suggestions for improvement, these will be used to inform future planning.

7.4 Other sessions have been organised for specific groups of members outside of the scheduled programme. As well as updates for members on regulatory bodies, refresher briefings and workshops have been organised for members of Select Commissions on issues such as local government finance or 'Keeping Warm in Later Life'.

7.5 A majority of members (an estimated 49 out of 63) have taken-up at least one organised training or development opportunity since May 2011, with many members attending multiple courses. This does not take account of e-learning, informal sessions with officers or attendance at member seminars. If these are included, it is likely that most members will have participated in a learning and development activity over the year (in addition to their own independent activity).

7.6 In addition, a regional programme has been circulated to members by email and in hard copy. This programme was organised by LGYH and funded through the RIEP (Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme). Although widely distributed, take-up has been limited (approximately 10 members). Nevertheless, informal feedback from members attending

sessions has been positive, although with suggestions for improvements. These comments will inform any future commissioning of courses.

- 7.7 The generic in-house programme is complemented by bespoke training and development, for example the Local Government Improvement and Development's Leadership Academy or regional leadership programmes offered at Northern College. These have been offered to members with special responsibilities, particular interest or specialism and new members. Because of budget pressures, these have restricted to priority areas or areas of changing policy such as health and well-being and planning. A substantial proportion of courses have been subsidised or run at no-cost (other than transportation). It is not known at this stage, whether these will run on a similar basis in the new financial year.
- 7.8 As in previous years, relevant sessions have been circulated to Parish Councils. Both Project Argus and Localism Briefings have been attended by large numbers of Parish Councillors (29 and 18 respectively).

## **8. Finance**

All activity has been funded through the Member Development and Training Budget or RIEP. However, limited activity has been organised or funded since December in line with budget pressures.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The Member Development Strategy aims to train and equip Rotherham MBC Members as well as possible 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 and previous over the previous two years. The member development programme should assist Members to understand the implications of these changes and learn to adapt to new ways of working.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Member Development Strategy (2011)  
Course attendance records May – 2011 to date

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