

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PANEL
2. Date:	4th September 2014
3. Title:	Member Development Activity - Update (September 2014)
4. Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

This report provides an update on progress in respect of Member Development activity.

6. Recommendations

That Members:

- a. Note the report and its content**
- b. Comment on the programme.**

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.

The programmes are based on local priorities as identified in the Council's corporate plan and Member's individual skills needs identified in the personal development planning (PDP) process.

Following the local elections in May, Member Development efforts have been focused on delivering an induction programme. However work has commenced to organise the PDPs; with priority given to new members and members with new responsibilities. Further updates on the issues raised in PDPs will be brought to the Panel for its consideration.

7.2 Update March - September 2014

As agreed by the Panel previously, pending the outcomes of PDPs, a limited programme was organised over this period.

These sessions included:

- Questioning skills
- Chairing skills

7.3 Induction

As outlined in previous reports to MDTP a comprehensive induction programme was planned for new members (and open to more established members).

Sessions delivered to date include:

- Safeguarding children
- Members' role as corporate parents
- Understanding ward data - e-casework
- Getting the most from IT/HR Portal (Drop-in session)
- Understanding Overview & Scrutiny
- Introduction to licensing
- Introduction to planning
- Member role in emergency planning
- Speaking and contributing to meetings
- Countering Child Sexual Exploitation – awareness raising for Members

A full evaluation of the induction programme will be presented to the next meeting of the Panel.

7.4 Autumn/Winter Programme September 2014- March 2015

The following sessions have been organised and publicised to Members:

- Introduction to Local Government Finance 9th September
- Equality and diversity 19th September
- Safeguarding Adults 25th September
- Licensing (PART 2) 2nd October
- Housing Allocations Policy 9th October

The following sessions have yet to be scheduled:

- Standards and Code of Conduct
- Public Sector Equality Duty - for decision makers
- Councillors role as school governors
- Questioning Skills
- Undertaking Casework – handling difficult situations
- Chairing Skills
- Social media (practical skills session)

7.4.1 Issues arising from the PDPs ranged from individual support needs (for example around casework or ICT requirements) to more generic requests for skills or knowledge development. Individual support needs are dealt with internally as far as possible. If additional input is needed that requires funding, these will be referred to the Panel or Deputy Leader for approval.

The generic requests include:

- Handling the media
- Speaking with confidence at meetings
- Emergency Planning
- Social media practical skill session
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Mediation between different groups or individuals
- Insight into Parliamentary Select Committees

7.4.2 In addition to these sessions, regular Member Seminars have been delivered on Council priorities or emerging issues. Regular bulletins on national legislative and policy developments are also available to all Members via the LGiU. Each Member will be contacted by email to remind them how to access this service. There are extensive e-learning resources, although there appears to be little take-up of this facility available via the learning and development site.

7.5 Externally provided learning and development opportunities

There are a greater number of Members assuming new leadership roles compared with recent years. To ensure that they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills, we are exploring how their development needs can be met (for example Leadership Academy or other bespoke programmes). As both the Licensing and Planning Boards have newly appointed Chairs and Vice-Chairs, appropriate development opportunities are being sought.

Many of the Leadership Academy programmes are free or heavily subsidised. Decisions to support attendance at Leadership Academy (or external training) are based on identified need or issues arising from PDPs, in liaison with this Panel or the Deputy Leader.

In with PDPs and/or assuming new positions of responsibilities, expression of interest have been sought to attend specific Leadership Academy modules. MTDP approval is sought for attendance on these sessions. Given that there is a greater number of Members assuming new responsibilities in respect of Overview and Scrutiny, MTDP is asked to approve the attendance of more than one Member of this module.

The Leadership Academy programme and expressions of interest is attached as Appendix 1.

7.5.1 Members will recall that they agreed a set of Training Support Principles at the meeting of MTDP of 17 December 2012; which are as follows:

- 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
- Priority will be given to sub-regional and regional provision. Attendance at events beyond the region will only be approved if there is no similar local provision possible
- Attendance of more than one Member will not normally be approved, as Members will be expected to cascade learning to colleagues
- 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.

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 (2013-16)
Personal Development Interviews

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