

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Training Committee

22 September 2011

Report of the Central Services Director

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 **MEMBER TRAINING PLAN 2011-12**

This report makes recommendations for the annual Member training plan.

1.1 **Topics to be addressed by the 2011 – 12 Member Training Plan**

- 1.1.1 As Members will be aware, all of the planned induction sessions for new members have now been completed. These sessions were fairly intensive and covered a wide range of material; I therefore recommend that the Personnel & Development Manager seeks feedback from “new” Members on the effectiveness of the Induction Programme and invites suggestions from them for the next Member Induction Programme. As it is possible that some new Members may feel a need for further information now that they have “got their feet under the table”, I also recommended that the Personnel & Development Manager contacts all “new” members to ascertain if they perceive they have any outstanding learning needs. In the past new Members have requested guidance on speed reading and one to one coaching on relevant IT applications used by the Council. I therefore propose that the Personnel and Development Manager reports her findings, and any recommended actions, to the next meeting of this Committee.
- 1.1.2 In comparison to many other Authorities, this Council historically has not had large numbers of people attending meetings open to the public. Nevertheless, I recognise that such meetings place additional demands upon Committee Chairmen. I therefore recommend that training in the chairing of such meetings is offered to all Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, and that the Personnel and Development Manager advises the next meeting of this Committee of the level of need and makes suggestions for addressing any requests for this training.
- 1.1.3 Members of this Committee will be aware of the need to be sensitive of equality and diversity issues, particularly in the light of increasing scrutiny afforded by the terms of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts, and will recall the reputational damage that has arisen to some Councillors elsewhere arising from comments made in e-mails etc. The programme attached in Annex 1 has been

developed by The Personnel and Development Manager, the Elections and Special Projects Manager (who is responsible for equalities issues within the Council), in conjunction with the external provider who recently delivered an officer training programme on equalities issues. Members of this Committee will note that the programme lasts for 2 ½ hours, and can therefore be run in the evenings. The Personnel and Development Manager has advised me that there is sufficient funding in this year's training budget to enable all Members to attend this programme. I therefore recommend that this Committee endorses the programme outlined in Annex 1 and that all Members are encouraged to attend.

- 1.1.4 In the current economic environment, this Council, in common with many others, is experiencing a high level of requests from the media for comments/interviews. Since even those with experience of such matters find being interviewed by the media a daunting experience, I recommend that all members of the Cabinet and all Committee and Advisory Board Chairmen are offered Media Interview Training. As the programme provided to Chairmen following the 2007 local elections was deemed to have been so effective by those who attended, I attach a "tried and tested" programme in Annex 2 to this report.
- 1.1.5 There is a need to equip members of those regulatory committees that have not yet formally received structured briefing/training with the knowledge that is required to make informed and legally compliant decisions. As Members will be aware, there are soon to be changes to the framework governing Standards Committees. I therefore recommend that once there is information about the precise nature of these changes, the Standards Committee is provided with some training in the new regime, and if necessary, is requested to define the learning objectives for a training/briefing session to be commissioned by the Personnel and Development Manager and "rolled out" to other Members.
- 1.1.6 Due to the ever increasing demands of the regulatory framework surrounding Licensing issues, it is appropriate to require Members of that Committee to attend an in house programme, to equip them with up to date knowledge. As it is possible that there may be further changes to the regulations, it may be necessary to run further "updating sessions" to appraise Members of the nature and impact of any changes. I therefore recommend delivery (by officers) of the following schedule:
- Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 – by November 2011
- Taxi and private hire licensing – by December 2011
- Refresher/update on case law/changes to legislation – June each year.
- 1.1.7 As Members are aware, it is anticipated that there are going to be substantial changes to the regulatory framework pertaining to planning matters, including the introduction of the proposed National Planning Policy Framework, and to the responsibilities of councils on this and other issues flowing from the Localism Bill. I therefore recommend that once there is clarity on the precise nature of these

changes, the relevant officers advise this Committee of appropriate training opportunities.

- 1.1.8 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to prepare a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and an Annual Investment Strategy. The Finance Director has submitted a separate report to this Committee proposing a training programme that could be delivered as part of the annual contract sum to be paid to the Council's independent treasury advisor. I endorse the recommendations made in her report.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 It is crucial that Members with responsibility for making "quasi judicial" decisions are fully aware of the underpinning legislation.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 In an attempt to secure value for money, wherever possible, the training proposals outlined in Section 1:1 above, will be run by officers from this or Councils with whom this Authority has a partnership arrangement.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 By providing the training outlined in section 1:1 above, the Council is equipping Members with some of the key skills intrinsic to their role and responsibilities. Further consideration will also be given by this Committee to the type of training that will need to be delivered to town and parish councils to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Members are commended to endorse the recommendations outlined in Section 1:1 of this report.

Background papers:

contact: Delia Gordon

Nil

Julie Beilby
Central Services Director

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The recommendations of this report relate to Member training/development.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	This reports makes recommendations that support Government initiatives and legislative change.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A.

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.