



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

Member Management Committee

Date: 31 October 2006

Subject: Member Development

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

At its meeting of 29th June 2006, Member Management Committee endorsed the proposal to make annual training for all regulatory Panel Members compulsory. The Committee instructed the Member Development Working Group to consider the design and format of the proposed regulatory programme and to make recommendations to Member Management Committee on its delivery.

This report presents the recommendations of the Working Group.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report presents the recommendations of the Member Development Working Group regarding training for members dealing with planning and licensing matters.¹

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 A Strategic Review of Planning Services has recently been undertaken. Improvement Aim 3; 'Development of, and Support for Plans Panels' includes the following recommendation:

"Introduce a compulsory minimum standard of training and briefing for all councillors who serve on Plans Panels and deliver the required programme of training and briefing to secure and maintain the agreed standards."

The recommendations arising from the Review were approved by Executive Board on 14th June 2006.

- 2.2 Subsequently the concept of extending this requirement to all Licensing and Regulatory Panels was agreed by Member Management Committee and at its meeting on 29 June 2006 charged the Member Development Working Group with designing the training programmes.
- 2.3 Since the last Member Management Committee meeting the Member Development Working Group, chaired by Cllr Latty, has met on a number of occasions to put together a draft training programme covering Planning, Licensing and general governance and conduct issues.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 Below is a summary of the proposed training programme. In summary, any member who has not previously sat on a Plans Panel will be required to attend a one day introductory session *prior* to attending their first Panel meeting². Thereafter, all Panel members will be required to attend, on an annual basis, the one day update session.
- 3.2 Similarly there will be compulsory Licensing training on an annual basis for Licensing and Licensing and Regulatory members and regulatory Panel substitutes.
- 3.3 All members dealing with planning and licensing matters will be required on an annual basis to attend a session on Governance and Conduct.
- 3.4 It has been noted that Members who are not directly involved in Planning or Licensing may nevertheless have an interest in such matters. Therefore the programme will also be open to Members who do not sit on the relevant panels or committees. The programme will also be supplemented by a programme of lunchtime seminars available to all members.
- 3.5 The table below provides a summary of attendance requirements. The proposed course content is detailed in Appendix A.

¹ Those members sitting on Plans Panels, Licensing Committee and Licensing and Regulatory Committee

² It is proposed that those members newly appointed to Plans Panels this municipal year will be required to attend the introductory session.

C= compulsory, O= optional, NR= not required.

	Planning Members (new)	Planning Members (experienced)	Licensing/Regulatory Members	Licensing Committee Members	Regulatory panel substitutes	All other Members
Planning Briefing for Members (Introductory level – one day)	C	O	O	O	C	O
Planning Policy Update for Members (Advanced level – split over two half-days)	C	C	O	O	O	NR
Governance and Conduct (Conflicting roles and their resolution; avoiding judicial review; bias/decision-making, interests etc – half day)	C	C	C	C	C	O
The Licensing Act/Gambling Act (half day)	O	O	O	C	O	O
Licensing/Regulatory (Introduction to the Panel, Taxi/Private Hire regulations – half day)	O	O	C	O	C	O
Lunchtime Seminar programme (On-going programme of lunchtime events aimed at broadening knowledge of Planning matters eg ‘Designing out Crime’, Using the Planning System etc)	O	O	O	O	O	O

3.6 The Member Development Working Group in designing the course content has discussed with trainers the need to ensure that at each training module has the following features:

- flexible training options for Members, by providing more than one course date, with as much notice as possible
- inclusion of practical and interactive training elements where relevant, eg mock-panels
- pre-course packs.

3.7 These revisions are in response to member feedback from previous training sessions.

3.8 Members are asked to note that the training for planning members is largely to be provided by external trainers with some in house support.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 If implemented, these proposals will ensure that councillors are adequately equipped to undertake their Council duties, are able to make effective and informed decisions and ensure good governance.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 The planning training will be undertaken by external trainers at a cost of £12,000 for four full-day sessions per year. This cost will be met by the Development Department. Licensing training and governance training will be carried out in house and be met within existing resources.

6.0 Monitoring and evaluating the programme

6.1 Attendance on the programme, particularly for the compulsory elements, will be closely monitored and reported to Whips on a regular basis.

6.2 In order to determine the success of the programme, each module will be evaluated to ensure that it has met its stated aims and objectives. This evaluation process is a standard success measure and used for all Member training programmes, as stipulated in the Member Development Strategy.

6.3 The evaluation will take the form of feedback sheets to be completed after each event, and also a follow-up questionnaire three months after the training has taken place. This process is vital to measure the effectiveness of the programme and will be used to demonstrate a return on investment. The information gathered from Members will also help us to improve the design of this and other training programmes in the future.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The proposals outlined in this report will make learning and development activities more robust for members dealing with planning and licensing matters.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 The Member Management Committee is asked to endorse the training proposals outlined in Appendix A.