

Employment Committee

Date: 30th June 2009

Agenda Item: 5

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REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL MANAGER

**ELECTED MEMBERS TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS 2009 AND UPDATE ON THE
USAGE OF MEMBERS ON LINE TRAINING MODULES.**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the opinion of the committee as to the content of the 2009 Elected Members Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and how best to ensure a high level of response.
- 1.2 To inform the committee on the usage of the Members on line training package purchased last year.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Employment Committee provides advice and direction on the above TNA.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees the identified training priorities of Elected Members for the next twelve months.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers if they wish to approve the continued subscription of the 'Modern Councillor' e- learning package after October 2009.
- 2.4 That the Committee advises on how best to promote 'Modern Councillor' e- learning package if we continue with the subscription.

3. Details of Report

Elected Member Training Need Analysis

- 3.1 Elected Member Training & Development is a key factor in Lichfield District Council's continuing performance as a good council.
- 3.2 To ensure that Training & Development events are meeting the needs of Members, we would ask the Committee to provide us with guidance on the content of the attached document and how best this should be communicated given that unless the Members actively promote their own Training and Development officers will continue to have difficulties ensuring Members take up opportunities presented to them.

- 3.3 With the involvement of this Committee last year we did improve the numbers responding to the TNA, which amounted to 30 replies, a vast improvement on the previous years (12 replies).
- 3.4 The purpose of the response is to identify any individual training and development requirements to ensure that Members are able to fulfil their role as a Councillor most effectively. There are some key areas identified as essential requirements for Members to attend namely:
- Probity – for all members
 - Planning – for Planning Committee
 - Audit – for Audit Committee
 - Finance – for the Executive, Audit Committees
- 3.5 The programme can be tailored to meet specific needs where there is sufficient demand identified. Appendix A sets out the Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire along with a Personal Learning Tool for Members.
- 3.6 There are some outstanding training actions from last year's TNA this is due to the unavailability of dates. We are currently seeking to organise events on Environmental issues (environmental crime, fly tipping etc.) and Dealing with Housing issues, which we anticipate will be officer led events and will be planned in while we await the outcome of the 2009 TNA.

3.7 Modern Councillor E-learning package for Members – Update

3.7.1 Background

Modern councillor is an electronic learning package specifically written for councillors. It offers another method of training and development, more flexible than traditional face-to-face workshops. If used by members, it can be very cost effective.

On the 2008 Members Training Needs Questionnaire, 16 out of 30 replies expressed an interest in e learning.

At the Employment Committee meeting of 29th September 08, a demonstration of the Modern Councillor package was given to members and a decision was taken to purchase a 12 month subscription.

In November 2008 with this committees agreement we signed up for a 12 month subscription at a cost to Members training budget of £2240, which gave access to 14 courses specifically developed on line courses.

It was anticipated that if at least the 16 who expressed an interest accessed the courses the cost of the training would be £140 max. per head, which is a very cost effective approach to learning given that up to 14 different courses are available.

3.7.2 Publicity to members

- E-mail was sent to all members in December 08, introducing the system and what it could offer. This included an invite to a demonstration and training session in January (planned member training date).
- A follow-up e-mail was then sent to each member with his or her personal login details.
- It was mentioned in the January issue of Headlines, the Member newsletter.
- At the Member training event, which was arranged as a drop-in session, 6 members attended. 1 member came in during the day for a 1-1 session.
- Where there have been queries regarding training with individual Members, the relevant course has been suggested to them.
- Posters have been put in the Members Room and Member reading racks.
- A hard copy leaflet was sent out to all Members in May 09.
- Reminder e-mail sent out June 09 to follow-up from the leaflet.

3.7.3 Usage

Members have logged onto the system and accessed courses, with one of those completing 3 courses.

Given that the take up to date has been very poor despite the amount of publicity to promote this to Members the cost per head currently sits at around £373 per head.

4. Consultation

4.1 The views of the Committee are welcomed.
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5. Financial Implications

5.1 There is a budget allocated for Elected Member training.
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5.2 When Members do not attend training there is a cost to the Council in terms of poor value for money in relation to the cost of training for Members actually attending.

6. Strategic Plan Implications

6.1 Member training is fundamental to ensuring the Council's objectives are achieved.

7. Human Rights Issues

7.1 There are no direct implications.

8. Risk Management Issues

The risks are identified below.

Description of Risk	Likelihood/ impact	Risk Status	Countermeasures	Responsibilities
Members availability to attend relevant training events	Medium/Low	Tolerable	Introduce more flexible ways of training and Development e.g. on line packages	Members, Employment Committee and officers allocated to support Member training
The risk of members failing to engage / attend planned training.	Medium/Medium	Material	Need to find ways of ensuring members engage with their own personal Development	Members, Employment Committee and officers allocated to support Member training.
Waste of resources /costs effectiveness associated with none attendance.	Low/Low	Tolerable	Encouraging members to attend events or make the training compulsory	Members, Employment Committee and officers allocated to support Member training.



ELECTED MEMBERS TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS 2009

June 2009

Elected Members Training Needs Analysis 2009

Elected Member Training & Development is a key factor in Lichfield District Council's continuing performance as a good council.

Sufficient time and funds need to be allocated to make this Training & Development effective.

- Provision has been made in your Calendar of 5 firm Training & Development dates throughout the coming year, and there are specific training dates in the diary. This will ensure that elected members have adequate notice of training events and can plan accordingly.
- Events will also be arranged to brief Elected Members in legislation and similar issues.
- A budget has been set that will provide sufficient funding for the 5 proposed Training & Development dates.

To ensure that Training & Development events are meeting the needs of Members, you are invited to express your Training & Development requirements on the attached Members Training Needs questionnaire. To help you identify your own development needs, I have included a **personal development tool** for you to work through. This will help you reflect on what are the core skills of an effective councillor, where you see your own strengths and where you might need to develop further. It then gives some ideas on training you could do to meet those needs. This is for your own private use and does not need to be returned.

- After working through the development tool, transfer your training needs on to the questionnaire.
- **Please** make full use of the section inviting your own ideas for topics not covered in the lists, so that your Training Programme can be tailored to your individual needs.
- **There is no need** to list legislation issues because these will be covered as essential training that will be directed at those Elected Members for whom it is relevant.
- **Please** return the completed form to the Training & Development Officer, Mandy Linthwaite, as soon as possible but in any case by 10th August 2009.

NIL RETURN:

This form should be returned even if you decide that **you do not require** any further training or development at this time. In this case, please tick below:

No further training required at this time.

Name:.....

Members Training Needs 2009

MEMBER'S NAME.....

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify any individual training and development requirements to ensure that you are able to fulfil your role as a Councillor most effectively.

1. We regularly organise training around 4 key areas:

- Probity – for all members
- Planning – for Planning Committee Members
- Audit – for Audit Committee Members
- Finance – for the Executive, Audit Committees Members

All members are welcome to attend these events. Invitations will usually be sent to relevant members but will be detailed on the Calendar of meetings.

If there is anything within the above areas you would like us to cover please indicate below.

Please tick the main training and development needs that you currently feel you require. If completing on computer please highlight the relevant boxes or put a y next to the box. ✓

1. Chairing meetings (procedures, objectives)

- Keeping control of meetings and ensuring procedural rules are followed

2. Communication and working with the media

- Managing media relations, speaking in public, dealing with interviews

3. Dealing with housing issues

- Understand current housing issues, such as homelessness and affordable housing, and dealing with housing queries raised by constituents

4. Procedural issues

- Getting your point across at Committee, ensuring you have a clear, effective and relevant message, how and when do I call in a decision

- 5. Equality and Diversity**
- To understand the Council's legislative commitments and the role member's have in delivering the equalities agenda.
- 6. Understanding Reports**
- Interpreting information, appreciating the context and what decision needs to be made
- 7. Representing the Community**
- How councillors lead their local community and neighbourhoods,
 - Community engagement
- 8. Risk Management**
- How to identify risk, why managing risk is important, mitigating risk
- 9. Environmental Health**
- Update on the key functions, including: food safety, pollution control, environmental crime (fly-tipping, littering etc.), licensing. *(please circle areas of interest)*
- 10. Working with Partners**
- Community engagement and partnership working, community empowerment
- 11. e Democracy** –innovative ways to engage with the community
- How IT may shape services in the future
- 12. Health and Safety/ Corporate Manslaughter**
- Update on Health and safety issues, including how the new Corporate Manslaughter legislation affects the Council
- 13. Climate Change**
- How it impacts people who live in your wards (e.g. fuel poverty) and the achievement of targets
- 14. The role of Overview & Scrutiny**
- Understand the powers attached to O&S, understand policy development and performance, how scrutiny can add value
- 15. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and CAA**
- Discover how LAAs impact on the Authority and why the input of Elected members is vital, impact of CAA.
- 16. Data Protection and Freedom of Information**
- Understand current legislation, its impact on the Council and your responsibilities

3. Information Technology

We have run a number of one-to-one sessions and small workshops in the past to ensure all of our members can communicate by e-mail and use Outlook.

Are you able to use e-mail now? Yes No

Is there any area of IT where you would like additional training?

4. E- learning

Have you tried the Modern Councillor e – learning package?

If yes – what did you think of it?

If no – why not? Time, not comfortable with learning via computer? Other reasons?

5. I recognise there may be other training and development needs that have not been covered, please give details below of any issues, subject areas or ideas for training delivery below:

6. Did you find the Personal Learning Tool useful? Yes/no
Any Comments?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The results will be used to develop on the programme of training for 2009/2010. All individual responses will be treated as confidential.

Please return this form to Mandy Linthwaite, Training & Development Officer by 10th August 2009.

A Programme of training will then be drafted.

Personal Learning Tool for Members

The toolkit below is intended to help you reflect on your own skills and identify areas you would like to develop. It is based on the Political Skills Framework created by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). There are then some suggestions of how these training needs may be met.

What is the Political Skills Framework?

To be effective in any job you need to know what is required of you and the knowledge and skills to achieve it. The IDEA recognised that little work had been done to identify the skills required of councillors, despite it being one of the most complex roles in politics. The local councillor role continues to evolve. The IDEA set out to identify the core skills required by councillors, holding focus groups with councillors and validating the results with 350 councillors.

The result was that 6 core skill areas were identified that apply to all councillors:

- **Local leadership** – engages enthusiastically with the community in order to learn, understand and act upon issues of local concern.
- **Communication skills** – listens sensitively, uses appropriate language, checks for understanding. Speaks clearly and confidently in public and makes sure that people are informed.
- **Partnership working** – builds positive relationships by making others feel included, working collaboratively, maintains calm and focus.
- **Regulating and monitoring** – understands and executes judicial role by following protocol. Adhering to the code of conduct, making decisions that balance public needs and local policy.
- **Scrutiny and challenge** – analyses information quickly and presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way. Seeking opportunities for scrutiny.
- **Political understanding** – acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing group views in decision-making. Works across group boundaries without compromising values or ethics.

How can we use it?

For each of these 6 core skills, there is a page that asks you to think about your strengths and where you might need to develop. There are some suggestions about training we might offer to help you in each area but this is not a definitive list. If you have any suggestions on training then please add them on section 5 of the Training Questionnaire.

This personal learning tool is to help you. You do not need to return these pages. Once you have worked through it, please complete the Members Training Needs questionnaire and return it to Mandy Linthwaite.

If you need any help in using the personal learning tool please give Mandy Linthwaite a call on 01543 308106 or Cathy Pepper on 01543 308112.

1. How do I see myself as a ward member?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- What sections of my community have I engaged with and canvassed opinion?
- How have I looked for new ways of representing people?
- Who have I built partnerships with?
- How do I champion others' needs?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Dealing with Housing issues
- e Democracy –innovative ways to engage with the community
- Equality and Diversity
- Community Leadership
- Dealing with complex issues (IDEA workbook available on the intranet)

Modern Councillor options: Data protection, Your role as Councillor, Community Leadership, Equality and Diversity

Any other training in this area?

2. How good am I at regulating and monitoring?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- How do I chair meetings and keep them on track
- Do I know enough about the legal process and the procedural aspects of meetings?
- Do I monitor others to ensure progress?
- Are my judgements based on evidence?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- Chairing and facilitating meetings
- Understanding licensing issues
- Financial skills, finding and interpreting information
- Planning (any new issues)

Modern Councillor options: Overview and Scrutiny, Licensing and Regulation, Chairing meetings

Any other training in this area?

3. How good am I at communicating with others?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- How regularly do I use newsletters, emails or local media to communicate with others?
- How well do I listen to others and adapt my style to their needs?
- Am I confident when speaking in public?
- Would others say I speak and write well?
- Do I feedback regularly to others to keep them informed?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- IT – using e-mail and Outlook
- Working with the media
- e Democracy –innovative ways to engage with the community
- Public Speaking

Modern Councillor options: IT in Local Government, Working with the Media, Public Speaking

Any other training in this area?

4. How good am I at working in partnership?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- What networks and partnerships have I developed?
- Do I stay focused and calm under pressure?
- Do I have a good understanding of Local Area Agreements and the Local strategic Partnership?
- Do I value and include people from different backgrounds?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- Equality and Diversity
- Working with partnerships
- LAA Learning to Deliver (from WMRIEP)

Modern Councillor Options: Community Leadership, Equality and Diversity

Any other training in this area?

5. How good am I at scrutiny and challenge?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- What areas have I identified for scrutiny?
- How well do I deal with new information?
- Am I objective and rigorous when challenging processes or people?
- Do I ask for explanations and check that things have happened
- Are my arguments concise, meaningful and easily understood?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- The role of Overview and Scrutiny
- Procedural Issues
- Scrutinising outside bodies
- Chairing meetings

Modern Councillor Options: Chairing Meetings, Overview and Scrutiny, Risk Management

Any other training in this area?

6. How good am I at political understanding?

What do you see as your particular strengths?

Prompts:

- Are my group' values reflected in what I do?
- How do I build cohesion within my group and improve communication?
- How have I developed my political intelligence (eg. Understanding of local and national policy and its implications for the Council)?
- How have I promoted democracy and increased public engagement?
- When did I work across political boundaries?
- Are my judgements based on evidence?

Which areas would you like to improve?

Suggested training:

- Updates on new issues in Planning, Environmental Health, Licensing, Waste management, Community Safety etc.

Modern Councillor options: Your role as Councillor, Community Leadership

Any other training in this area?

