

NON EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL/EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Joint Human Resources Committee

11 June 2013

COUNCILLOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

Report of: Caroline Tickner, Service Manager (HR)

FOR DECISION Information Item Only

Portfolio: Marketing & Development: Councillor Phillips

Key Decision: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Joint HR Committee with information on the agreed Councillor Training Programme for implementation. This training programme has been developed in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders for the Marketing & Development Cluster and Democratic Services. The training programme has been developed for both East Hampshire District Council and Havant Borough Council. Development of a joint programme is more efficient and cost effective.

2.0 Recommendation

RECOMMENDED

- 2.1 That the members of Joint HR Committee note the content of the Councillor Training Programme and promote it's use with Councillors.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The position of Councillors is vital in the local community. Whilst there are no formal qualifications that Councillors need to hold it is essential that they are provided with the right training opportunities.
- 3.2 Councillors are required to balance the needs and interests of their residents, voters, political parties and the Councils. We recognise that there is a specialist skill set needed to ensure Councillors are the most effective that they can be.

3.3 Investing time in Councillor training and development is crucial for the future. The environment that we work in is ever changing, never more than at the present. This means that we are constantly presented with new challenges, such as reduced finance from central government and increased customer expectations. These challenges, facing both Councils, means that we will need to make some significant decisions about the ways in which services are delivered in the future. Councillors will require commercial acumen, negotiation and media handling skills to help them manage these decisions and communicate them effectively. Preparing Councillors for future change is part of this programme.

4.0 Subject of the report

4.1 The training programme will help to prepare Councillors for the different roles they may hold in the Council. This programme identifies the different types of training/skills development which are deemed to be appropriate for Councillors at different stages of their career.

4.2 The foundations will be put in place through an induction programme to enable new Councillors to understand the different functions of the Council. To underpin this induction programme an e-learning provision will be made available to further support knowledge development. Representing the Council will require new Councillors to develop the media skills needed to promote the reputation of the Council. Running alongside this will be IT training and specialist training to ensure Councillors are equipped with the necessary skills to commence their political career with the Council.

4.3 Councillors who aspire to be a chairperson or representative on a committee will be required to undergo further training in order to take up these posts. The training will ensure they have the skills needed to represent the Council effectively in public forums and make key decisions on the future of different Council services. The range of training available at this level will maximise the impact Councillors can have.

4.4 Councillors who wish to go on to develop their career to Executive Member level will be required to undergo additional training. This training focuses on building on the skills already developed throughout their career along with a stronger focus on leadership skills.

4.5 The training provided at each level will be a mix of in-house and outsourced delivery. The facilitation and co-ordination of this programme will be managed through Democratic Services. There is a risk that Councillors will not undertake the training. To mitigate this risk, Councillors will be required to attend and complete these courses as mandatory where required. For example, if specialist training is not undertaken, then Councillors will not be considered for certain posts within the specialist committees i.e. Licensing. [For further information on the training programme, please refer to Appendix A and Appendix B]. To further mitigate this risk, there will be a process of monitoring put in place

which will provide the Leader of each Council with training uptake and progress of Councillor development on a quarterly basis.

- 4.6 Whilst there will be a corporate Councillor Development Programme, there may be Councillors with individual training needs which fall outside of this. To support Councillors with specific development needs, a personal development plan will be available. All Councillors will be encouraged to use this plan to further identify training needs. This process will be facilitated via Democratic Services in conjunction with the Leaders.

5.0 Implications

Financial

- 5.1 There will be financial implications associated with the implementation of this training programme however it is anticipated that this will be funded through the councillor training budget.

Legal

- 5.2 No legal risks identified.

Strategy

- 5.3 None to report.

Customer access

- 5.4 None to report.

Risks

- 5.5 Providing Councillors with appropriate training for their role will increase confidence and capability in dealing with the media and challenging members of the public and therefore mitigate the risk of adverse attention.

Communications/Public Relations

- 5.6 None to report.

East Hampshire/Havant

- 5.7 This training programme is for delivery across East Hampshire and Havant.

6.0 Links to other projects

- 6.1 None to report.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The importance of Councillor training has been acknowledged by various official bodies e.g. LGA; Audit Commission. To do their job effectively Councillors need to understand what their role involves. The public have high expectations of their Councillors and we need to ensure Councillors feel confident in carrying out their role.
- 7.2 Promotion of this programme by Business Development Panel members will send out a strong message of the importance of Councillors to actively engage with training and development opportunities on an ongoing basis.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 For Joint HR Committee to note the content of the report and the attached training plan for Councillors.

Background papers used in the production of the report (national/regional/internal reports and research):

Agreed and signed off by:

Executive Head for Governance and Logistics 24.5.13

Legal Services: 24.5.13

Executive Head for Marketing and Development: 24.5.13

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