

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
David Thow, Head of Planning Services	Planning Committee	5 August 2015	6

Training Programme for Members of the Planning Committee – 2015/16

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To continue to provide a primarily in-house structured training programme for Members that covers various planning topics.

2. Outcomes

2.1 Enhanced and developed Member skills in accordance with the principles of Best Practice adding value to the decision making process.

2.2 Delivery of effective tailored training on various planning topics at a lower cost than procuring external paid for training provision.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Members agree to a structured training programme over the following year to include the following topics:

Flood Risk and the determination of planning applications

Affordable Housing – What it is and how it is delivered

Appeals – procedures and costs

Planning enforcement

Highways issues in determining planning applications

Section 106 agreements

Outline and Full applications – implications for decision making

Note: This programme may be subject to amendment and additional training sessions may be inserted as and when necessary.

4. Background

- 4.1 Planning has a positive role to play in delivering services to local communities. To achieve its objectives, a number of different partners must work closely together. The Government is responsible for national legislation, and national and regional guidance. Local planning authorities produce development plans and determine individual planning applications. It is therefore particularly important that correct procedures are followed and that Members receive training on various planning matters.
- 4.2 The Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) reported in 1997 on various aspects of local government practice. One chapter of their report was devoted to the planning system. This made a number of recommendations designed to ensure full public confidence in the planning process. One was that, 'All members of an authority's planning committee (or equivalent) should receive training in the planning system, either before serving on the committee, or as soon as possible after their appointment to the committee.'

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1 There are a variety of ways in which training in planning can be provided for Members. It is, however, relatively common for senior planning officers within authorities to provide both induction and refresher training for Members. The advantages of providing in house training is that Members do not have to travel far to receive the training, it can be tailored to the particular issues faced by the authority, it is relatively cheap and can be laid on at times to suit Members.
- 5.2 The proposed training programme will primarily be delivered by key officers and will cover topics that are relevant not only to Planning Services, but that will enhance and develop Member knowledge and skills. Developing Member knowledge and skills will add value to the decision-making process resulting in improvements to service delivery.
- 5.3 The proposed training programme being a mix of formal and informal sessions will also enhance and develop existing good professional working relationships between officers and Members.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	No implications – training to be provided internally by officers.
Legal	No implications.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
data protection	x

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List of appendices

None

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