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Report

Report subject: Consultation on Member Training Requirements

Report to: Audit Committee

Date: 26th September 2006

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The report outlines the training that has already been provided to Members of the Audit Committee and seeks Members' views on whether any additional training is required, particularly in view of changes in the membership of the Committee.

2 Current and recent training provision

- 2.1 A recent Scrutiny review of Member training has resulted in the development of a new training and development programme for Members. The draft programme is attached as an appendix for information. Aspects of the programme will be relevant for the Independent Members and these will be made available to them also. In addition specific external courses may become available which can be offered to Members of the Committee.
- 2.2 The table below shows the training provided specifically to the Committee.

Area of Training	Date of Training
Internal Audit	July 2005
Role of Audit Commission	July 2005
Risk Management	October 2005

3 Potential Areas for Training

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider whether there are any specific training needs relevant for their role on the Committee that will not be covered by the new programme.



Awarded in:
 Housing Services
 Waste and Recycling Services





SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Draft Councillors' Training & Development Programme

The training programme consists of five elements:

- **Pre-induction module:** *aimed at candidates.*
- **Survival Induction Module:** *for new members.*
- **Members Induction/ Development Programme:** *for all members, but with a particular focus on new members.*
- **Leadership:** *Aimed at cabinet members, chairs, vice chairs and those aspiring to such positions*
- **Continuing Development:** *Additional training opportunities on specific themes.*

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PRE INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

The pre-induction process is based around the council's successful job advertisement recruitment campaign.

Pre Induction Pack

Those responding to the advertisement or those selected by the local political parties receive a comprehensive information pack containing:

- Candidates guide (electoral arrangements)
- Council fact file - budget summary, structure, functions, etc.
- Vision, Core Values & priorities
- The national scene, awards & accolades
- A guide to partnerships
- IDeA local authority benchmark data
- Maps & stats
- Councillor allowances and resources
- Members Induction and Training Programme

Pre - induction event

The information pack is augmented by an introductory 'taster session,' where candidates can meet other members and senior officers, the format of the evening is based around the following:

- SDC its culture and direction of travel - Chief Executive
- The electoral process - Phil Bellas
- The members' perspective - Leader
- Scrutiny - councillor presentation
- Area Committee - councillor presentation
- Meet the members (informal chat with a cross section of members)

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SURVIVAL INDUCTION PROGRAMME

Following the election, successful candidates are provided with an intensive six-week induction aimed to get them '*up and running*' in their new role. These sessions are generally discussion based in a group environment with plenty of scope for Q&As. They are well supported with written materials, multi-media presentations, practical exercises and some sessions are delivered by professional facilitators/trainers. The core of this programme includes:

- The Councillors' Reception - a social 'get-to-know-you' evening, signing the declaration of acceptance of office, official and press photos, issue of security passes and other necessary administrative matters.
- Meet the team - a chance to meet the management team and service managers.
- Seminar - Surviving the early months with introduction to the training and development programme.
- District tour - bus tour of council facilities and services.
- Planning and Area Committee crash-course - includes determining real planning applications.
- Introducing Scrutiny - all new backbenchers.
- One to one training and development needs assessment.
- Home visit to install IT equipment with introductory session.
- Chairing Skills - selected members
- Leadership and the Role of the cabinet member - cabinet members

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MEMBERS' INDUCTION/ DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

To be effective in any job you need to know what is required of you and you must also have the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve it. The *members' development programme* is built around an assessment of each individual members' training and development needs, which is then addressed through a flexible modular programme. The core programme is supported by a range of high quality training materials that build into a comprehensive reference manual. In addition, a range of optional courses and additional information is provided within each module for those with particular interests.

The programme acknowledges the time constraints faced by most members and is arranged as a series of bite-sized training courses - most of which can be undertaken in the comfort of the members' own home. The programme can be completed within 6-8 months, based on an average of 3-4 hours study per month - although the pace of progress is determined by the member's individual requirements.

Module 1: *The effective councillor*

Following the euphoria of election night, you will soon be faced with the day-to-day challenges of life as a ward councillor. This module will give members the skills and knowledge they need to become an effective ward councillor. It covers: how local government works, working with and getting things done for constituents, standards of conduct and how to survive the committee system.



An introduction to local government ▫ Legislative framework ▫ Structures ▫

Functions ▫ Powers ▫ Financial framework ▫



Working in the Ward: ▫ Managing your case load ▫ Getting things done for your constituents ▫ Serving on outside bodies ▫ The members' support service ▫



Standards & Conduct ▫ The National Code of Conduct ▫ Interests ▫ Gifts and hospitality ▫ Slander & Defamation ▫ The Ombudsman ▫



Meetings: ▫ SDC committee structure ▫ Area Committees ▫ Law and conduct ▫ Access to information ▫ Exempt business ▫

Module 2: *Community leadership*

As a councillor you are a vital democratic link between public services and the people who depend upon them. This module will equip you with the skills you need as a community leader. It covers: how to engage all sections of the community, deal with difficult people and stay in touch with local issues in your community.



Consultation & community engagement: ▫ Consultation techniques ▫ Community and parish planning ▫ Partnership working ▫



Equalities & diversity: ▫ Disability discrimination ▫ Diversity awareness ▫ Race Relations Act ▫



Working in Partnership: ▫ Parish and Town Councils ▫ Local partnerships ▫ Working with the voluntary Sector ▫



Mediation & negotiation: ▫ Resolving conflict ▫ Dealing with difficult people ▫ Assertiveness ▫

Module 3: *Inside the council*

As a councillor your role includes managing a complex organisation providing over 50 key public services; responsibility for a £100m budget and a workforce of over 700 employees. Your role also involves holding decision makers to account and agreeing strategic priorities and policies for South Wiltshire, both now and in the future. This module provides an introduction to the management of the council, its key services and policies.



Understanding the Budget: ▫ Introduction to local government finance ▫ Understanding the accounts ▫ The Budget process ▫ Budget consultation ▫ Financial regulations ▫ Audit ▫



The Scrutiny Role: ▫ Principles of Scrutiny ▫ The Scrutiny Toolkit ▫ Serving on a Scrutiny Review Group ▫ Key skills for Scrutineers ▫



The Corporate Plan: ▫ Corporate planning cycle ▫ Portfolio plans ▫ Performance management ▫



On the Frontline: ▫ Housing ▫ Environmental Services ▫ Community Services ▫ Benefits ▫

Module 4: *Communication & information*

Communication and Information are essential for councillors - managing the vast amounts of information that will be heading your way, speaking up for local residents, getting to grips with IT and dealing with enquiries from the media and constituents. All are covered in this final module of the programme.



Getting your message across: ▫ Effective presentations ▫ Public speaking ▫
▫ Effective Writing ▫ Facilitation techniques ▫



Information: ▫ Data protection ▫ Freedom of Information ▫ Data sources ▫ Research ▫
▫ Manage your mail ▫ Speed Reading ▫



Surviving IT: ▫ Using your kit ▫ Introduction to MSOutlook and MS Word ▫ Getting the best from the web ▫



Dealing with the Media: ▫ Understanding media thinking ▫ Preparing a press release ▫
Interview technique ▫ Appearing on television ▫

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THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Leadership programme is aimed at cabinet members, chairs, vice chairs and those aspiring to such positions. The training is available on a pick and mix basis and is authorised by the Councillors Training & Development Steering Group. Available courses include:

- The IDeA Leadership Academy
- Service specific courses - such as Planning and Licensing
- Chairing Skills
- Managing Performance
- Additional modules will be added as appropriate

The Council may wish to explore the possibility of obtaining Leadership coaching/ mentoring from councillors of other local authorities who are already in a Leadership position.

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CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

The Members Development Programme aims to provide core competencies for all members. But nothing remains static in local government for very long. New services, duties and powers are conferred regularly, new funding arrangements are introduced and legislation changes all the time. Providing training and briefing materials for members as these changes arise helps to ensure our councillors remain up to date and informed at all times.