

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee
3rd December 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Elected Member Training Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Summary

This paper outlines the Scottish Government's recommendations for Elected Member training and development and summarises the training delivered so far. It then provides the results of the training needs survey conducted with Elected Members and makes proposals for a training programme for October 2008-June 2009 and role descriptions and personal development plans for members.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Programme for the Highland Council 2009-2011 includes a commitment to agree an annual training and development programme for elected members by December 2008 and to introduce role descriptions and performance development plans for councillors.
- 1.2 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance 2008/09 also includes a commitment to agree an annual training programme and personal development plans for members.
- 1.3 A new remuneration package was introduced for councillors with effect from the May 2007 election. As part of this package, recommendations were made as to the training and development for councillors.
- 1.4 These recommendations cover:
 - A role description in a format determined by the council
 - Participation in a training needs assessment
 - A personal development plan

Audit Scotland is currently surveying all Scottish Local Authorities to determine the progress made in meeting these recommendations.

- 1.5 It was further recommended that details of training undertaken by Councillors in the year should be published and Highland Council reported this as part of its publication of Members Remuneration and Expenses for 2007-2008.
- 1.6 The Improvement Service has developed a draft Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Elected Members in Scottish Local Government. This framework is now being piloted with 7 councils.
- 1.7 The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) have undertaken a review of the implementation of remuneration arrangements for Local Authority Councillors. The report from this review makes three specific recommendations with regard to training and the reporting of training, role descriptions and personal development plans.

2. Elected Member Training delivered

2.1 An induction programme was provided for all new and returning Elected Members as appropriate and included:

- Introduction to Highland Council
- Code of Conduct
- Local Government Finance
- Remuneration and expenses
- The Committee Process
- Support Services and ICT
- Communication – web, media and Freedom of Information
- Well Being Alliance
- CRM & Members Portal

2.2 Following the induction, training on specific topics has been delivered to some Elected Members:

- Staff Appeals training
- Recruitment & Selection (appointment panel)
- Recruitment & Selection (school appointments)
- IT workshops
- Planning
- Licensing Board
- Media Training
- Audit & Scrutiny
- Chairing skills

Councillors can also attend the range of in-house ICT training courses, including the European Computer Driving Licence.

3. Training Needs Analysis – Training Attended

3.1 In November 2007, the Administration Business Meeting agreed that the Employee Development Manager undertake a training needs analysis to determine Elected Member development requirements.

3.2 An electronic survey was sent to all Elected Members and 40 responded, this provides a strong representative sample. The questionnaire asked Members:

- which training they had attended so far and how useful it had been
- which further training they required from a suggested list
- any other training requirements or comments

3.3 Appendix 1 provides a chart showing the numbers attending each type of training and the numbers rating the training useful, quite useful and not very useful.

4. Training Needs Analysis – Training Required

4.1 The questionnaire asked Members to identify from a list which topics they would like training or further training:

The most popular topics identified were:

- Presentation Skills
- Community Engagement
- Local Government Finance
- Personal Management – Influencing & Negotiating Skills
- Effective Meeting and Chairing Skills

For a full breakdown of responses, please see Appendix 2

4.2 Members were also asked to identify any other training requirements. These included:

- Finance:
 - Setting and controlling budgets
 - Housing Finance
- Planning
 - Regular updates on Planning
 - Impacts of Planning decisions
- Ward Forums
 - Running Ward Forums
 - Working with Community Councils/roles and responsibilities of Community Councillors
- Chairing Meetings
 - including minutes/note taking in a structured way
 - assessment of skills in chairing meetings
- Managing information
 - e-mail system
 - prioritising information/mail/flyers
- Handling difficult people
- Gaelic

5. SLARC recommendations

5.1 The review of arrangements for Councillor remuneration makes three specific recommendations with regard to the training and development of Elected Members.

5.2 The report recommends that all councillors should be required to undertake appropriate training to enable them to perform their duties as a councillor effectively. This suggests that the Council identify appropriate training and development activities to support councillor duties and that Elected Members are encouraged to attend.

5.3 The report further recommends that all councillors should have a role description, participate in a training needs assessment, and have a personal development plan in place by 31 March 2009.

5.4 Finally the report recommends that Councils should publish information on councillor training. As a minimum, this should contain information on the number of councillors undertaking particular training and the type of training provided. This information should be published on the Council website at the same time as the councillor's salary, allowances and expenses information is published.

5.5 In order to meet these requirements, proposals are made to take forward work on:

- A training programme for Elected Members
- Role Descriptions for Elected Members
- Personal Development Plans for Elected Members, building on the training needs assessment already undertaken

6. Training Programme for Elected Members

- 6.1 It is proposed to provide an agreed training programme for all Elected Members to run from October 2008 – June 2009. The programme planner with dates and venues for the year would be held on the intranet as is currently done for staff development. An up to date programme, with more detailed information about each course and a named contact, would therefore be easily available and Members would be able to register for training events through an electronic application.
- 6.2 It is hoped that early information on a programme of training will enable Members to plan their attendance in advance and so assist Members with managing all their commitments.
- 6.3 The proposed topics for the programme include all those identified through the Training Survey. In addition there are some topics included which Members need in order to fulfil specific requirements e.g. Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Managing Child Protection. However, additional topics if required can be added throughout the year. Members would also be able to request specific individual support if required.

The proposed programme is in Appendix 3.

Training on specific functions such as Audit and Scrutiny, Licensing Board and Appeals undertaken as part of induction for relevant Elected Members would continue to be provided as appropriate. The recommendations of the Political Arrangements Working Group/Governance Review Group are also likely to result in further training requirements in respect of licensing and planning.

- 6.3 A record of training attended by individual councillors would be maintained similar to that already in place for staff. This would be used as a reference for members on their own training and also to comply with the reporting requirements.

7. Role Descriptions

- 7.1 The next step is to agree role descriptions for councillors, senior councillors and office bearers. It is proposed, therefore, that the remit of the Governance Review Group is extended to agree the principles of the role descriptions for Highland Council Elected Members with the aim of having these in place by March 2009.

8. Elected Member Individual Development Plans

- 8.1 The Training Needs Survey and planned programme of training is the first step to meet the recommendations on Elected Member development. In order to agree an individual Personal Development Plan, role descriptions should be available, so that individual training can be matched to the requirements of specific roles.
- 8.2 In addition, the Improvement Service is piloting a national Framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Elected Members with a number of Local Authorities. The CPD Framework consists of 14 political skills underpinned by 80 behaviours. The pilot councils are using an online tool that has been developed to give 360 degree feedback. The Improvement Service and the 7 pilot councils are also collaboratively commissioning the design of professional development materials based around the 14 political skills. The outcome of these pilots will influence our

personal development planning process.

- 8.3 As an interim measure towards achieving personal development plans, Appendix 4 provides a template for a simple Development Plan and Training Record, where an individual member's requirements and completed training could be recorded. This Plan is based on the Training Programme with space to enter individual training requirements.

It is proposed that this Record is held centrally and updated on behalf of each Member based on courses applied for and attended.

- 8.4 It is also proposed, however, that personal development plans are developed for all councillors and that this would be done in conjunction with the Council's senior training and development professionals.

9. Resource Implications

- 9.1 Training provided for Elected Members would be delivered both by Highland Council staff, if appropriate, and external providers. Where external providers are used, best value would be obtained by organising and running the courses in Highland. Members will also be able to attend existing courses run by Employee Development (e.g. ICT courses) where this is appropriate.
- 9.2 To ensure cost effectiveness, the emphasis will be on more training in-house for larger numbers and less individual attendance at conferences and seminars.
- 9.3 Training would be funded through the existing budget for Elected Member development.
- 9.4 The development of personal development plans will require significant support from the Council's Employee Development Team, with senior officers being involved in supporting the process.

Recommendation

That the Resources Committee:

- a) approve the proposed Elected Member Training Programme for October 08-June 09
- b) approve the proposed management of the programme through Employee Development and the intranet
- c) agree that the Governance Review Group agree the principles of role descriptions for Elected Members
- d) approve the proposed Elected Member Development Plan and Training Record
- e) agree to progress the personal development process for Elected Members in line with the SLARC recommendations

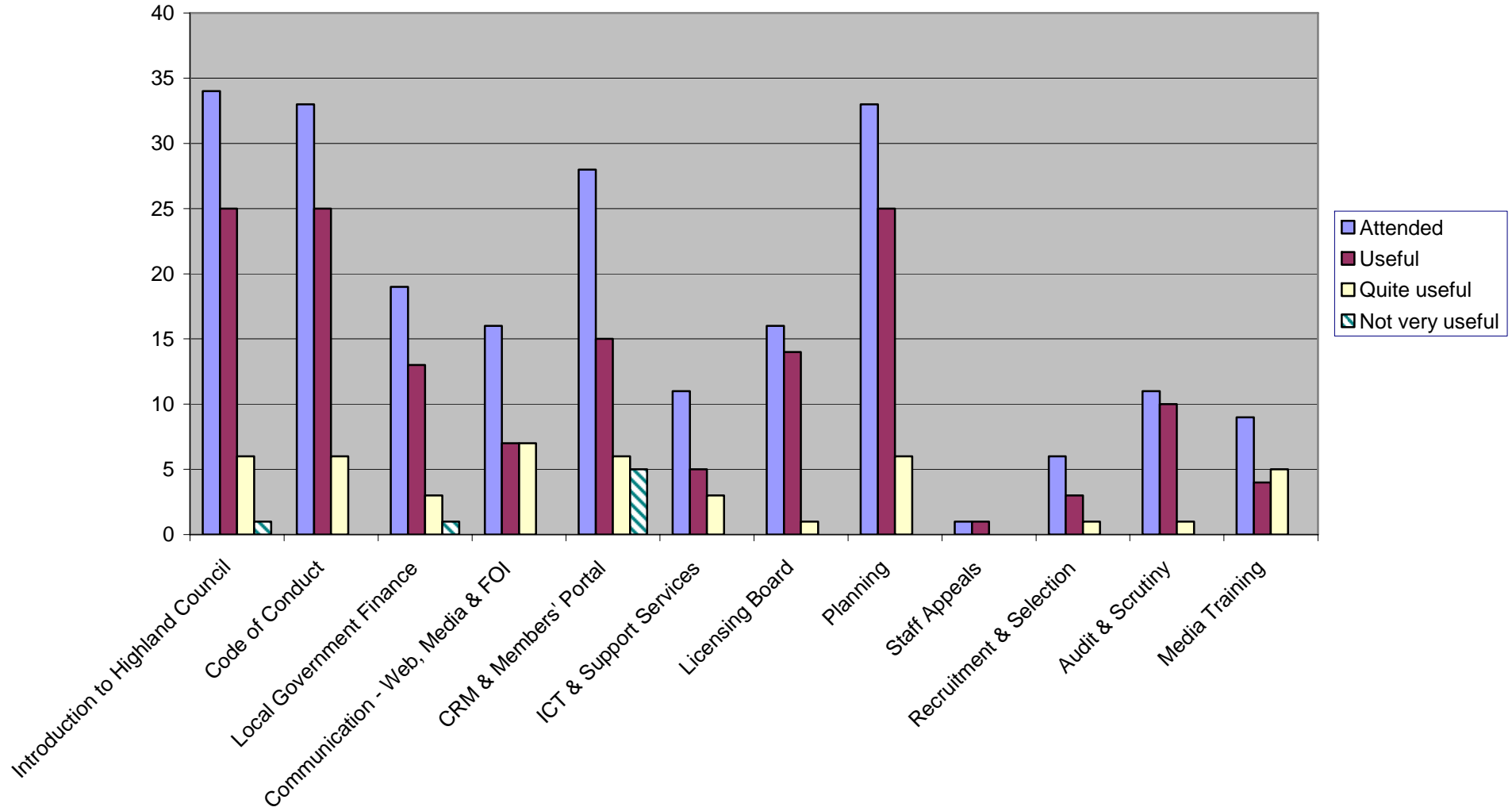
Signature:

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive

Author: Cathy Christie, Employee Development Manager

Date: 13th October 2008

Elected Member Training



3. FURTHER TRAINING Please tick the topics on which you would like training or further training

	Response Count	
	%	
Recruitment & Selection	17.9%	7
Media Awareness	41.0%	16
Effective Meetings and Chairing Skills	46.2%	18
Presentation Skills	48.7%	19
Equalities & Diversity	17.9%	7
Community Engagement	48.7%	19
Membership of Outside Bodies	38.5%	15
Responsibilities of a Company Director	25.6%	10
ICT - Microsoft Office	23.1%	9
ICT - European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)	23.1%	9

Local Government Finance	48.7%	19
Personal Management - Time Management	41.0%	16
Personal Management - Managing Casework	38.5%	15
Personal Management - Influencing & Negotiating skills	46.2%	18
Answered question	39	

Elected Member Training Programme Oct 08 – June 09

Local Government	
Information Governance – Freedom of Information and Data Protection	
Local Government Finance/Setting & Controlling Budgets	
Code of Conduct for Members and Planning Guidance	
Community Engagement	
Membership of Outside Bodies	
Responsibilities of a Company Director	
Performance Management – Single Outcome Agreement and Corporate Plan	
Managing Child Protection, Sex Offenders and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)	
Policy and Practice	
Recruitment and Selection	
Equalities and Diversity	
Gaelic	
Communication Skills	
Media Awareness	
Effective Chairing Skills	
Presentation Skills	
Personal Management	
Working with People – Influencing and Negotiating skills - dealing with challenging behaviour	
Managing Casework and Time Management	
ICT	
Introduction to Outlook	
Using the Intranet/Internet	
European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)	



Elected Member Development Plan and Training Record

Name:

Date:

Training & Development Activity	Date completed
Local Government	
Information Governance – Freedom of Information and Data Protection	
Local Government Finance/Setting & Controlling Budgets	
Code of Conduct for Members and Planning Guidance	
Community Engagement	
Membership of Outside Bodies	
Responsibilities of a Company Director	
Performance Management – Single Outcome Agreement and Corporate Plan	
Managing Child Protection, Sex Offenders and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)	
Policy and Practice	
Recruitment and Selection	
Equalities and Diversity	
Gaelic	

