Colchester

Report of	**Assistant Chief Executive**	**Author**	**Andrew Weavers** ☎ **2213**
Title	**Review of Meetings and Ways of Working Progress update**		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

7 March 2017

> **This report provides a progress update for the review of meetings and ways of working.**

1. Decision(s) Required

1.1 To note the progress made to date on the review of meetings and ways of working.

1.2 To confirm which of the initiatives outlined in **Appendix A** should be prioritised so that further investigations can be undertaken and a report, containing recommendations to Council, can be submitted to the June 2017 Committee meeting.

1.3 To agree, in principle, that a full cost analysis of the options for streaming Committee meetings be undertaken, to be reported back to the Committee in June 2017.

1.4 To agree that the Governance and Audit Committee move from paper to electronic agendas from the commencement of the new Municipal year and that the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Panel and the Revolving Investment Fund Committee be invited to consider whether they wish to do the same at an appropriate time, and other meetings do so on a phased approach, to be agreed.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

2.1 The review of meetings and ways of working has provided an opportunity to look at how Colchester Borough Council conducts its committee meetings and what measures might increase engagement by members of the public. Following input from both Councillors and members of the public a number of key ideas have been identified. A decision is now required as to which of the ideas should be pursued and investigated in more detail before a report is brought back to the first Governance and Audit Committee of the next municipal year.

2.2 Part of the review of meetings and ways of working included undertaking research on the cost implications of streaming meetings online. The report includes indicative costs for each of the options; further research and a site visit will be required to confirm the actual cost. In addition to this, it has come to light that the wireless microphones used in the Grand Jury Room, Moot Hall and G3, Rowan House are now no longer serviceable and need to be replaced. Due to the integrated nature of microphones and streaming equipment, it would be advantageous to have an indication as to whether streaming should be looked into further, in order to inform decisions on the procurement of a new microphone system.

2.3 The Council is currently implementing a Digital Challenge initiative, which aims to change the way Colchester Borough Council works by making the next technological leap to

maximise use of existing and new technology as well as reducing use of paper. As part of the Digital Challenge there is the opportunity to introduce, from the beginning of the next municipal year, a pilot where Councillors would access meeting agendas digitally through portable devices. This is intended to save money by reducing printing. To ensure that Councillors are supported through this change it is recommended that the move to digital agendas be trialled by the Governance and Audit Committee, and that the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Panel and the Revolving Investment Fund Committee be invited to consider doing the same.

3. **Supporting Information**

3.1   The Governance and Audit Committee requested that a review of meetings and ways of working be undertaken at its meeting on 26 July 2016 which was subsequently confirmed by Full Council. The original objectives of the review were;

- Improve public participation at meetings
- Make public meeting more accessible and engaging for residents
- Make the way we work more flexible to improve the opportunity for an improved diversity of Councillors
- Offer Councillors a more efficient way of working through better use of new technology.

3.2   Following approval of the objectives and the scope of the review, officers drafted a report to the September Governance and Audit Committee meeting highlighting a number of ideas that could be pursued. The report also outlined progress on current projects that could benefit Committee meetings including improvements to the Town Hall Wi-Fi and the implementation of Office365 for both officers and Councillors.

3.3   An informal meeting was held on 24 October 2016, inviting all Councillors to contribute ideas on how committee meetings at Colchester Borough Council could be improved. A total of 17 Councillors attended the meeting, and the below are the key themes that emerged from this session -

- ICT for Councillors
  - Appropriate equipment
  - Move to Digital Agendas
  - Acknowledgement that some members may not be able to take the step to digital agendas
- Assess how the Council can stream its meetings online
- Shorter and more accessible agendas
- Reports to include an executive summary
- Possibility of re-introducing Members Tea's.
- Members Room improvements
- Start times of meetings, including the possibility of different times for different meetings.
- Review of Have Your Say! in the Constitution
  - Assess the possibility of accepting written submission of questions.
  - Allowing for those attending to ask a supplementary question
  - Focus on measures that would make having a say at committee meetings more friendly and welcoming for members of the public.
- Assess training opportunities for Councillors, in particular Chairman training.

3.4   A public survey was launched on the Council's website on 13 January 2017 and was communicated to members of the public using the following means;

- A press release, details of which were published in the Colchester Gazette and Essex County Standard
- A range of social media posts
- Colchester Borough Council consultation webpage,
- Committee Management Information System (CMIS) webpages,
- Democratic Services Committee Information Newsletter
- Distribution to all Parish and Town Clerks.

3.6 The survey, which closed on 17 February 2017, received a total of 81 responses. Responses provided are included in **Appendix B.** In addition, some members of the public with wide experience of our meetings processes either commented online here or provided detailed written comments which are attached at **Appendix C**.

3.7 Three public sessions were also arranged to provide an opportunity for members of the public to speak to Councillors and Democratic Services officers about the survey and any questions they have about the democratic process. One of these sessions took place at Colchester Town Hall, and another two took place on the same day in Tiptree, the first of which was outside Tesco and the second was in the Community Centre.

4. Standard References

4.1 At this time there are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; publicity or consultation considerations; or financial; equality, diversity and human rights; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

Appendix A

REVIEW OF MEETINGS AND WAYS OF WORKING IDEAS SUMMARY

1. Councillor ICT

1.1   Previous discussions by Councillors had suggested that the same equipment be provided to all Councillors. The results of a survey of Councillors ICT equipment highlighted that a number of Councillors already have a device, or devices that are compatible with Office365 and are able to access digital copies of agendas. An indicative cost of supplying iPads to all Councillors would be approximately £20,400.

1.2   The Council's current policy is that if Councillors do not have access to a device on which they can conduct Council business, equipment will be provided to that Councillor following discussions with the Council's ICT team. Given the number of Councillors who already have access to compatible devices the number of requests for devices is likely to be low.

1.3   The Council is currently upgrading Officers and Councillors to Microsoft Office365. This system allows access to e-mails and files from any internet enabled device in any location. This will provide greater flexibility and improved reliability for Councillors. In addition, the upgrade to the Town Hall Wi-Fi network has been completed successfully although further consideration may need to be given to access to electrical sockets in the meeting rooms.

2   Digital Agendas

2.1   The Council uses CMIS committee management software to create, publish and host committee related information; this includes Councillors information and meeting agendas. It is possible for anyone with internet access to access digital copies of agendas from the website when they are published.

2.2   Councillors, Officers and members of the public are able to download a tablet application called MyCMIS to automatically receive and download agendas as soon as they are published. The application, once users are logged in, has a range of functionality including annotation of agendas and access to councillor contact information. The application is now available on iPad, Android tablets and Windows 8-10 devices.

2.3   The Democratic Services team members together with a number of Councillors have been using the application on a trial basis during Committee meetings, with regular feedback being provided to the developer.

2.4   Given the significant change in providing agendas digitally to Councillors rather than providing printed copies, the opportunity could be taken to invite three Committees to trial the use of digital agendas. It is proposed that the three Committees that will move to using digital agendas from the commencement of the next municipal year are the Governance and Audit Committee, the Scrutiny Panel and the Revolving Investment Fund Committee.

2.5   The intention would be to continue to provide a small number of printed copies of the agenda for members of the public who wish to attend the meetings.

3   Streaming of Committee meetings

3.1   All public Council and Committee meetings are currently recorded and uploaded to the website for people to listen to. Whilst the aim is to upload recordings the day after the meeting, as the procedure is not straightforward, this is sometimes delayed.

3.2   In the light of both public and Council support, research was undertaken to provide a summary of the options for live streaming meetings for both video and audio only. There are four options available for streaming committee meetings online;

- Public-i – A bespoke solution and the current market leader in providing live video streaming for Council committee meetings.
- Youtube – Provides the ability to stream meetings online for free, requiring the purchase of camera equipment and software.
- Audiominutes – A bespoke audio only committee meeting streaming solution.
- MixLR – Audio streaming website using mobile applications.

3.3   Of the options listed above, further cost analysis has been provided for both Public-i and Audiominutes below. They provide an integrated and specific solution for broadcasting committee meetings live. They are also less resource intensive than the other options suggested and include the provision of support to ensure that the streaming is functioning correctly. In addition, the Council's Communications Team advised against using Youtube as a streaming solution, as the volume of meetings could dilute the current Council content on Youtube.

3.4   Streaming summary table;

	Public-i	**Audiominutes**
Supported	✓	✓
Video	✓	
Camera tracking	✓	
Audio	✓	✓
Recording facility	✓	✓
Integrates with CMIS	✓	✓
Contract Cost	£35,000 (3 year contract)	£11,700 (3 year period)
Equipment Cost	£5,000 (3 year lease)	N/A

3.5   Public-i

3.5.1   Public-i is the market leader for live web streaming Council committee meetings and already work with a number of councils in Essex, including;

- Epping Forest District Council
- Braintree District Council
- Brentwood Borough Council
- Southend on Sea Borough Council
- Castlepoint District Council

3.5.2   Public-i provides camera tracking technology that works with the microphones to identify and focus on the current speaker, together with streaming any presentation slides that are being used during the meeting. In addition to this, Public-i will provide a website which works with CMIS and also has the facility for webchats for each live streamed meeting.

3.5.3   The indicative cost for a contract with Public-i would be £35,000 over three years, and a one off £5,000 installation fee. This would include the lease of one mobile

camera unit (for use in different rooms), or one set of fixed cameras (for one room only), 90 hours of web streaming per annum and support. The total duration of all Council Committee meetings per year exceeds 90 hours. Therefore consideration on whether all meetings are streamed or whether an additional streaming solution is installed in another room will be required.

3.6   Audiominutes

3.6.1   Audiominutes is currently used by the following Councils in Essex;

- Basildon Council
- Essex County Council
- Uttlesford District Council

3.6.2   Audiominutes uses a microphone feed and android software to broadcast the audio of meetings online. This system would be integrated into CMIS, with the live feed and recordings of meetings accessible through the relevant meetings page on the website.

3.6.3   The cost is £325 per month for unlimited meetings. This price is for the fully supported version, which includes the ability to stream to 1,000 listeners and a 500-hour archive of meetings.

3.7   As the wireless microphones used in the Grand Jury Room, Moot Hall and G3 in Rowan House are no longer functioning correctly this is an opportunity to review the options for streaming Committee meetings alongside the upgrading of the microphones. This would ensure full compatibility if a streaming option were chosen. It may also be an opportunity to review the provision of audio visual equipment in meetings rooms to ensure that, with the ever increasing use of digital technology, meeting rooms are fit for purpose.

3.8   The Committee will need to consider which of the options presented should be further investigated, with a full cost analysis produced.

4   Shorter Meetings Agendas/Executive Summary

4.1   A review of Committee report templates was suggested as a way to reduce the size of meeting documents as well as reducing the time spent reading for Councillors and improved understanding for and willingness to engage by members of the public. Improvements to report format / templates include:

- The use of an Executive Summary which requires the Committee author to start a report with a broad summary or overview of the subject matter, followed by an indication of the decision required to be taken;
- The use of bullet points for summaries;
- The avoidance of the use of jargon and acronyms in reports;
- More effort being given to the use of Plain English, wherever possible;
- The adoption of a brief description of the report content in the agenda running order beneath the report title.

4.2   There are numerous examples of the use of Executive Summaries in reports from other Local Authorities - Chelmsford, Braintree and Epping Forest to name a few. The format/make-up of agendas is not proscribed in legislation and Colchester's current report format has not been amended for some years. This suggested approach would therefore seem to be a very welcome change which would benefit both Councillors and members of the public, whilst also reflecting good practice adopted elsewhere and would have little

significant impact on resources. A reminder to all report authors to ensure a Plain English approach is adopted for all future report writing could be included within a review of the Committee report template.

4.3   In considering the introduction measures to reduce the amount of information in meeting documents, the Committee should bear in mind that the overuse of summaries could lead to allegations of important information being hidden or not readily accessible. In addition, certain technically related subjects may lend themselves less well to this approach, as such, there would need to be the ability for more complex subjects to be reported in greater depth, as necessary.

4.4   Further measures to reduce the time spent in meetings, to promote more efficient and better informed decision making, whilst encouraging greater public engagement included:

- A more proactive approach to the number of agenda items at meetings;
- A more structured approach by Chairmen to the length of time spent debating Committee items;
- The allocation of pre-determined time-slots to the agenda running order;
- For meetings to generally last no more than two hours.

4.5   Whilst some Councillors may feel comfortable with a more structured approach to Chairmanship, in practice, this may result in Chairmen feeling a greater sense of responsibility for the success or otherwise of decision making. Meetings tend to be conducted in different ways, dependent on the membership, the subject matter being discussed and the venue. A requirement for Chairmen to regulate discussion time with the aim of confining meetings more strictly to a maximum duration of, say, two hours, may lead to allegations of stifling debate. There is also the potential for shorter meetings to have the knock-on effect of leading to a greater number of meetings due to an inability to accommodate work programme commitments. The suggestion may also prove to be incompatible with the aspirations of the public to enhance their use of Have Your Say! opportunities.

4.6   An opportunity could also be taken to undertake a review of the decision making information contained on the website which would have the benefit of making the Councillors and Meetings pages more readily understandable and easier to navigate to for members of the public. Such a review could include:

- Greater use of Frequently Asked Questions;
- Use of the website for standard meetings information;
- An update of the Have Your Say! information and procedures to raise its profile, make it more appealing and welcoming;
- To provide more 'how to' information such as for downloading meetings calendars and subscribing to e-newsletters;
- Use of photographs of meeting rooms.

4.7   This would also have the benefit of reducing the size of and replication in individual agendas with the information being available at all times. A rewording of the information about how meetings work would give an opportunity for the language used to be less complicated and for legislative jargon to be removed. It would be possible to programme in such a review in the period leading up to the new Municipal Year, with little significant impact on service delivery at this time. However, care would need to be taken to ensure those attending meetings were made aware of changes to agenda formats and the ability to access information from the website. Croydon Council is an example of a Local Authority

which publishes photographs of rooms on the website which may help to assist the public in visualising how meetings will be conducted.

5   Meeting Start Times

5.1   Concerns have been expressed that it is difficult for some Councillors and residents to make a 6pm start time for meetings, particularly those who commute to London. This was not a universal view and there was some support for retaining the 6pm start time. The results of the survey indicated that the most popular meeting time for residents from the options provided was 6pm, but there was also some support for later meeting times of 7pm and 7.30pm.

5.2   For information, the average length of evening meetings so far this municipal year is set out below:-

- Full Council: 2 hours, 40 minutes
- Cabinet: 1 hour, 45 minutes
- Planning Committee: 1 hour, 40 minutes
- Local Plan Committee: 3 hours, 5 minutes
- Scrutiny Panel: 2 hours, 30 minutes
- Governance and Audit Committee: 1 hour, 30 minutes
- Trading Board: 1 hour, 40 minutes
- Revolving Investment Committee: 1 hour, 5 minutes
- Licensing Committee: 45 minutes
- Licensing Hackney Carriage Hearings (evenings only): 1 hour, 50 minutes

5.3   Moving all meeting start times to 7pm would address the concerns about the 6pm start time. However, the following factors may also need to be taken into consideration;

- The need to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete business. If the business is not completed, more meetings may be required, possibly at short notice. Whilst this could be addressed by shorter agendas or stricter management of the meeting and debate this may lead to concerns that issues are not being properly debated.
- The impact on the quality of decision making if meetings routinely finish later.
- Longer working hours for Councillors and officers. There would also be significant increased officer resource required from the Democratic Services Team and other officers who frequently attend meetings, for example the Executive Management Team, Heads of Service, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, plus some additional Hallkeeping costs.
- This issue needs to be considered together with the review of the Have Your Say! arrangements. If Have Your Say! arrangements are amended to increase public involvement this needs to be taken into account when considering issues around the length/start time of meetings.

5.4   Currently all meetings have the same start time, but an alternative approach would be to adopt different start times, dependant on typical agenda and meeting lengths. For example those meetings which tend to last longest or where it is most crucial that the business is completed could start at 6pm. For example Full Council, Local Plan, Planning, Licensing Sub-Committee/Hackney Carriage hearings, Scrutiny Panel (approximately 40 meetings per year) could start at 6pm with all other meetings at 7pm. This would partly alleviate concerns over the 6pm start time, but the implications listed above would still apply to those meetings commencing at 7pm. There would still be a resource implication, but not to the same extent.

5.5 It is possible that different start time could cause some confusion with members of the public, but this could be managed through appropriate publicity. A number of other neighbouring authorities operate different start times for different meetings.

5.6 Council Procedure Rules state that meetings of Full Council should start at 6pm unless Cabinet agrees otherwise, so changes to start times of Full Council meetings would require a referral to Council for an amendment to the Constitution

6 Review of Have Your Say!

6.1 At the Councillor informal meeting, the following suggestions were made for consideration;

- Addition of supplementary question for the Have Your Say! speaker for a period of one minute, which would be taken from the existing three minutes.
- Review of where Have Your Say! speaker is located to ensure a welcoming environment for public speaking.
- To allow the submission of written questions.

6.2 As can be seen by the survey results members of the public were keen for the Have Your Say! arrangements to be improved.

6.3 For comparison, below is a table that outlines the speaking arrangements for authorities in Essex.

Council	Public questions/ statements	Process to register	Time per question/statement	Total allocated
Braintree District Council	1 Question	No later than 5.30 pm, 2 clear working days before the meeting	3 minutes	30 minutes
Colchester Borough Council	Questions or Statement ("Have your say!") Members are allowed to ask one question of the speaker but there will be no discussion.	Prior to the start of any Council meeting – must be in connection with issues on agenda or an issue which the committee would deal with.	3 minutes per speaker.	15 minutes (In practice time limit not usually enforced)
Brentwood Borough Council	Questions – max 2	No later than 10 am, 2 clear working days before the meeting	None indicated but after 15 minutes any unanswered questions will be answered in writing and placed within the minutes	15 minutes

Castlepoint Borough Council	Questions – max 2 per person	7 clear working days prior to meeting	None indicated	None indicated
Chelmsford City Council	1 Question or Statement	At Council meeting – may ask 1 question after providing name and address	2 minutes per person No supplemental	30 minutes for Full Council
Epping Forest District Council	Can submit up to two questions with the opportunity for a supplementary.	For Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny question must be pre-submitted four days in advance.	None indicated	None indicated
Essex County Council	One question for Full Council, which occurs prior to the meeting officially starts. Statement/questions at Cabinet/Scrutiny.	Questions at Full Council require seven days notice, registering to speak at Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees takes place before the meeting starts	3 minutes	30 minutes (Council) – 15 minutes (Cabinet and Scrutiny)
Harlow Council	Two questions, additional supplementary	Two working days notice	None indicated	30 minutes (Council) 15 minutes – Cabinet/ Committees
Maldon District Council	Questions to Council/Overview and Scrutiny	Two clear days' notice. Overview and Scrutiny questions do not require pre-submission.	2 minutes	10 minutes
Rochford District Council	Questions – max 2 per person	By noon, 7 days before the meeting	3 minutes per question 1 min for the supplementary	None indicated
Southend Borough Council	Questions - max 2 per person	5 clear working days before the meeting	None indicated	30 minutes
Tendring District Council	Questions only permitted at Local Plan Committee and Planning Committee			

Uttlesford District Council	Questions	By noon, 2 working days before the meeting	3 minutes per speaker	15 minutes

6.4   Supplementary Question

6.4.1 The opportunity to ask a supplementary question was the leading response from members of the public when asked how Have Your Say! could be improved. In addition, there were also a number of comments, categorised as 'Other' which would support the introduction of supplementary questions. Colchester Borough Council's Constitution already provides for an additional one minute for the speaker to respond to questioning from a member of the Committee. A rewording of the Constitution would be required to allow for this extra minute to be used for a supplementary question.

6.4.2 A suggestion was made that the additional minute for the supplementary question could be taken from the existing three minutes allotted for public speaking. The majority of responses to the public survey indicated that they did not feel that Have Your Say! provided enough time to speak. In addition, reducing the time limit to two minutes may cause some concern for those members of the public who do not wish to ask a supplementary question.

6.5   Location of Have Your Say! Speaker

6.5.1 In response to the public consultation, no comments were received about changing or improving the location of where members of the public spoke from. In response to an earlier question in the survey 70% of respondents felt either welcome or very welcome when they arrived at a Committee meeting.

6.5.2 The suggestion to provide a roving microphone could be adopted in order for members of the public to speak from their seats. However this may require extra support staff to ensure that the microphone is working and delivered to the relevant member of public, it could also lessen the Chairman's ability to control the meeting.

6.6   Submission of written questions

6.6.1 The majority of Councils included in the table allow for written questions to be submitted through e-mail, however they do not then accept questions to be asked at the meeting without pre-notification. Introducing written questions has the potential to significantly increase the workload for officers in processing the questions and assisting Councillors in responding to the question. There would also need to be an agreement on how the written questions and responses are dealt with at Committee meetings given the current time provisions for Have Your Say! and how multiple questions on the same subject would be dealt with.

7   Social Media

7.1   Suggestions to enhance the type and frequency of messages relating to Committee meetings and items of business sent out from the Council's Twitter account related to Committee agendas have been discussed with Jo Parlett, the Council's Marketing and Communications Manager. She confirmed she would be very willing to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the issues in more detail. She has provided examples of a range of factual tweets about business to be conducted that could be posted by the Communications Team leading up to a meeting taking place. However, the use of Twitter to promote meetings and participation in Have Your Say!, to highlight items of business

and to communicate information about the democratic process were not things that she considered could be accommodated. She explained that the Communications Team were required to work in accordance with the Council's Social Media Policy and the Employee Code of Conduct. As such the team must remain neutral, with tweets needing to be restricted to business being conducted only whilst the posting of tweets during meetings would have to be restricted to decisions only with no commentary. She was also of the view is that this is not a good use of social media. She confirmed that the Communications Team would be able to post tweets to encourage Have Your Say! attendance, although she cautioned that simply raising a profile was not necessarily a guarantee of better participation.

7.2 In terms of the potential for a separate twitter account for democratic / meeting related matters, the Marketing and Communications Manager's view is that the existing Council Twitter account is for strategic messages which should include the meetings related matters. Currently further consideration of separate Twitter accounts require the submission of a business case to demonstrate need and the ability to offer additional engagement. Regarding the use of other social media platforms to highlight meetings related issues, the Marketing and Communications Manager's view is that, this would be deemed a strategic part of the Council's business and, as such, the website would be considered the best vehicle to provide this information. She explained the use of other platforms might lead to a duplication of the function of the website, which was the Council's accepted home for key messages and key information.

7.3 It's considered that there is not sufficient capacity in the Communications or Democratic Teams to accommodate the suggestions regarding tweeting during meetings or responsibility for a dedicated 'meetings' Twitter account. The adoption of a streaming solution may negate the need to consider alternative social media options, given also the ability of individual councillors to use their own social media accounts. Automated software solutions are available which integrate with particular agenda / minute publication platforms but this would be subject to additional financial costs.

8 Members' Room Improvements/Members' Teas

8.1 The Members' Room at the Town Hall is not currently a particularly welcoming or useful environment for members. It currently contains the pigeon holes for members' post together with number of shelving and filing arrangements containing documents that are rarely referred to. It also contains the camera and computer equipment for the issuing of security cards. There is comparatively little seating and no facilities for the charging of devices. A modest refurbishment of the room would provide members with a much more user friendly place to work and meet cross-party, especially before meetings. The relocation of the pigeon holes to the group rooms would also improve the security of the pigeon holes, which are currently in an unlocked room.

8.2 It was previously the practice to provide members with a light tea in advance of Council and Committee meetings. Members valued this as an opportunity to meet and discuss matters in an informal cross party environment. Some members have indicated that they would welcome its reintroduction as it is felt that it helped make meetings more business-like, shorter and less confrontational. In addition, the provision of a light tea may help those arriving straight from work, who may not have the opportunity to eat in advance. However the Council no longer has an in-house catering service. The provision of some basic catering facilities in the Members' Room, such as a sink unit, microwave oven, crockery, tea/coffee making facilities, would enable members to prepare hot drinks and light food, and meet together before meetings.

8.3   Colchester Borough Homes have provided some indicative costs for refurbishment of the Members' Room, to include

- Removal and relocation of the pigeon holes;
- Redecoration, including new carpet and lighting;
- Installation of a tea bar kitchen;
- Installation of docking station points;
- Replacement of furniture

The estimated total costs are approximately £17,000 although it is stressed that this includes a number of options and it would be possible to proceed with only those that members deemed necessary. This excludes the relocation of the equipment for the security passes and the practicality and costs of this are being looked into.

9   Develop Further Training Opportunities for Councillors

9.1   The Council has recently agreed to seek reaccreditation for Member Charter Status for Elected Member Development. The key elements of the Charter are that member development should be member led and that structures and processes are in place to deliver training and development that meets members' needs and supports the Council's corporate and strategic priorities. In addition strategies must be in place to evaluate the benefits development brings both individually and to the Council as a whole.

9.2   As part of the work towards Charter Status the Council will be seeking the views of all members on their training needs through a number of tools including Personal Development Plans and Training Needs Analysis forms. This information will be used to draft a new Training Plan for the Council.

9.3   Member development is managed by an all party Member Development Group and each political group has a dedicated budget to fund training and development. It is open to all members to suggest areas or subjects on which they would like to see training provided. These would be considered by the Member Development Group and the costs met from the existing member development budget.

9.4   Training is mandatory on quasi-judicial functions such as Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Code of Conduct hearings. Consideration could be given to making training on other areas mandatory, such as:-

- Safeguarding
- Chairing Skills for all Chairmen;
- Scrutiny training for Scrutiny Panel members