



meeting **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

date **19 JANUARY 2005**

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE – MEMBER TRAINING

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of proposed arrangements for Member Training in connection with the planning work of the Council, particularly with reference to the work of the Planning & Licensing Committee.

Background

2. At its meeting of 6th May 2004, County Council approved a Code of Best Practice for the operation of what is now Planning and Licensing Committee.
3. Amongst other matters, the Code covers Member Training, and at Paragraph 4.5 states:- "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE MEMBERSHIP OF PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE IS ANNOUNCED, THOSE MEMBERS MUST ATTEND A TRAINING SESSION, TO TAKE THEM THROUGH THE VARIOUS PROCEDURAL ISSUES THEY ARE LIKELY TO MEET. NO MEMBER SHALL BE ALLOWED TO VOTE ON ANY MATTER COMING BEFORE PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE UNTIL THEY HAVE ATTENDED SUCH A SESSION."
4. This training session, details of which are still to be finalised, should be mandatory for all Members of Planning & Licensing Committee, and, subject to the availability of places, would be open to other Members, who will come into contact with planning matters when elements of the Development Plan are progressed through full Council.
5. Given the high profile of many of the issues Members will be asked to consider while sitting on this Committee, it is important that this event covers a wide range of topics and situations which Members may be asked to face. In order to embrace as broad a range of experience as possible, and to ensure that the advice being offered is impartial, it is felt the event should be facilitated by external providers.

6. It is particularly important that Members receive a good grounding in planning, in the light of recent changes to legislation. Furthermore the training will supplement the Council's own Member induction process, and will pay particular regard to the issue of probity, which can be major factor in planning matters
7. Expressions of interest have been canvassed from 5 external organisations who specialise in this sort of training. These are:-
 - i. *Trevor Roberts and Associates - Consultants*
 - ii. *Oxford Brookes University*
 - iii. *University of the West Of England*
 - iv. *University of Central England*
 - v. *Aaron and Partners – Solicitors*UCE have now confirmed they will now not be able to meet our timetable, but proposals have been received from three of the other four providers. The estimated costs will be in the following range:-
 - a) *£1450 + VAT + travel costs*
 - b) *£2475 + VAT*
 - c) *£3000 + VAT*
8. The event is likely to take place over one day, with a lunch break, and will involve a mixture of formal tuition, workshops and exercises. Course notes for all participants will be provided. The preferred choice is Oxford Brookes University at an estimated cost of £1450 plus VAT plus travel expenses.

Statutory and Policy Implications

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of Finance, Equal Opportunities, Personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of the report. The attention of Members is, however, drawn to specifics as follows:-

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RECOMMENDATION

21. It is RECOMMENDED that approval be given for
 - a) the use of Oxford Brookes University to provide a training session for Members on planning procedures, at an estimated cost of £1450 plus expenses,
 - and b) for expenditure for refreshments and lunch.

PETER WEBSTER
Director of Environment

Legal Services' Comments (SB 7.01.05)

The Committee has the power to make these arrangements

Director of Resources' Financial Comments (DK 7.01.05)

Funding for this training course will be split equally between Members' Services and the Environment Department in the same way that attendance at the Planning Summer School held last year was funded.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None.