

Stronger Council Update

1. Planning Training

Member Planning (11:30) & Planning Enforcement (13:30) Training is scheduled for the 13th May as part of the new & re-elected Members Training Programme. Planning has recently reviewed the content and paperwork for the training and agreed to provide a separate session on the Local Plan for all members, the date(s) is yet to be arranged. The training will be held in person at the Civic Offices and all members will be invited.

As Planning decisions are quasi-judicial and any member may be asked to make a planning decision, either as part of a Planning Committee or at Council, Planning rules and member obligations need to be understood by all and therefore this training and its attendance is compulsory.

Town and Parish members are welcome to attend the planning sessions.

2. ELearning

Town and Parish members cannot have access to Litmos as they do not have access to the Council's IT systems.

Following the individual engagement sessions with Councillors, Member Services are mindful that not all Councillors are aware they have access to our Member Portal which sits on the home page of the Council's website (bottom right-hand corner). The Portal hosts a range of useful information for Members. This will continue to be addressed through communications

Member Services are keen to utilise the Council's eLearning system – Litmos to deliver some of the Member training, and useful courses such as GDPR, Data Protection, Cyber Security etc are all on there already. Officer discussions to develop Litmos for members will take place in the coming weeks.

The cost of the Litmos licence is £11,000 per annum.

3. Training

Virtual training sessions have been very popular with members and the recent Safeguarding training was well received. Cllr S Kane has previously received a report on the status of Member Training – who has done what courses etc. Member Services are happy to present the training programme at the July Stronger Council meeting. In the meantime, a copy of the 2022 – 2023 Training Schedule is included as Appendix 1

Discussions will take place regarding an officer/member buddying proposal.

4. Organisational/Employee Chart

Members can access an interactive organisational/employee chart through their iTrent ESS accounts.

Access Guidance

On the iTrent home screen there is a link called "Org Chart"; clicking on the link will take you to your own place in the structure. You can then use the + button to expand the chart.

When you click on the + sign under Georgina Blakemore's name, the EFDC structure will begin to open up for you.

Keep clicking on the + sign until you see the part of the structure you want. Conversely, use the – sign to close down the structure.

There is also a "Search org chart" feature where you can enter a name or team, press the search icon and some options will be offered to you e.g. if you searched for the name Smith, all the people entitled Smith would appear for you, choose your preferred option and the structure chart will open to that person/team.

Any member who has not logged into iTrent your password will be your date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY

Any problems with logging into iTrent please email hradmin@eppingforestdc.gov.uk.

A PDF version of the Chart down to Service Manager level will be published in the next available Member Briefing

5. Workforce - Locations

40% of our employees live in the district, 30% live within Essex and 30% outside Essex, predominately in one of the London Boroughs.

6. Hybrid Working

A Hybrid Policy has been drafted and presented to the Executive Leadership Team for consideration.

Service Managers and above are meeting regularly at the Civic Offices as are several teams. Work continues to encourage all employees to work in the Civic for at least part of their working week.

7. Customer

To enable member enquiries to be managed effectively and in a timely manner a Member Contact Form was developed. There are some issues with the use of the form and Member Services are working on the "How to" Guides and Tutorials to resolve this and offering coaching to Members. The benefits of the Contact Form include;

- Members can create a personal account using their EFDC email address which stores all their personal details so they only have to enter them once.
- The Member Contact Form logs and tracks all enquiries and ensures Members receive a response to queries within a pre-determined SLAs.
- The dashboard provides a summary of all individual Member Enquiries via the "My Requests" tab to monitor progress and review responses.
- Member Enquiries are allocated to specific Officers and Service Areas, therefore enquiries are personally managed and not sent to a generic mailbox.
- Members can escalate enquiries to the Member Services team if they are not satisfied with the response provided for final resolution.

The discussion at Stronger Council has been relayed to Service Directors and the importance of Customer Service to deal with customer enquiries promptly and effectively.