

GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY

14 February 2019

MEMBER INDUCTION & DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Communications, Resources (other than Finance)	
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Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Provides feedback on various items to help inform the Member Induction and development programme for May 2019 and beyond.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In preparation for the Induction post the Election in May 2019, Members are asked to review the proposals for the induction and ongoing development plan and provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Council places a high level of importance in ensuring that Members have the right support and training to carry out their role. The intention is that the induction and development plan for 2019/20 and beyond will be structured to ensure that members have the knowledge and skills required to equip them in the role of elected members and also provide them with the opportunity for continuous

development.

- 2.2 In order to ensure that the programme of training is tailored to the needs of elected members, the Council would like feedback on what has worked well, what can be improved and thoughts on some suggestions we have to improve current processes.
- 2.3 This report breaks down the Induction and Development topic into various themes and asks a series of questions for Members to consider.
- 2.4 The feedback we receive from this report alongside what we have already learnt from separate conversations with some Members will be an essential factor in designing the programme for 2019 and beyond.
- 2.5 Council business does not stop throughout the election period, but there is a period of time where statutory meetings are reduced to allow for purdah, the election and subsequent appointment of members to committees. This is likely to mean that there will be items of business which will require Council and/or Committee approval shortly following Annual Council. Officers will be looking at the Forward Plan and the key decisions that may be brought to Members in the first few weeks and will ensure that Members are supported, with appropriate briefing and training sessions, in making these decisions. This agenda may also influence the timing of statutory meetings in the first few months of the municipal year and this will be reflected in the Programme of Meetings.

3 MEMBER INDUCTION 2019

3.1 Induction Training

- 3.1.1 Historically the primary induction event has been held on one day, it is proposed that the content of the induction be spread over several focused sessions over a period of weeks to allow a more gradual settling in process.
- 3.1.2 A proposed table of induction training has been provided at Appendix A. The table gives a summary of the type of training that is proposed to be delivered in the first 8 weeks following the Election in May and beyond. The training listed in the first two weeks is considered high priority, during week's three to eight, medium priority training would be provided. Beyond week eight a variety of training will be provided in order to complement and enhance skills and knowledge required.
- 3.1.3 It is proposed that the initial welcome event shown in Appendix A should be a 3 hour session to include a very general overview and opportunity to meet the Directors, receive a tour of the building and parking passes/identification etc...
- 3.1.4 The timetable and structure is based on a model applied at similar authorities. Working out what is best for all Members is not straightforward. Members have different backgrounds, experiences, time commitments and learning styles. We know that what might work well for one, might not be the best for others.
- 3.1.5 Nevertheless, we do know that soon after being elected Members will be asked to attend meetings and make decisions. Therefore, the initial induction programme is always going to be quite intensive.
- 3.1.6 Members should note that it is the intention to develop a Cabinet Member specific

induction programme which would sit along-side the Member's induction.

Questions

3.1.7 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Has each training event described in Appendix A been given the correct level of priority with reference to the timeframes for delivery?**
- **What do members think about the requirement for specified training session to be made mandatory?**
- **Are the training events in Appendix A which are listed as mandatory the correct ones, or should others be included in the mandatory list?**
- **Does the proposal to repeat training sessions on different days and at different times provide sufficient flexibility for members?**

3.2 IT Equipment/Training

3.2.1 The current offer for members includes the choice of a tablet or a laptop. Some existing members prefer to use their own devices and the Council supports this as well. Research is currently being done into the best electronic device that will enable members to carry out their role effectively and also to facilitate the corporate move towards reducing paper as discussed below.

Questions

3.2.2 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Do Members prefer to have the choice of a tablet or laptop device?**
- **Would Members want the choice of using their own device?**
- **Would the provision of IT Drop-in sessions for members in order to explain functionality of devices and Council systems be useful?**
- **Would the provision of training on the Modern.Gov Application for accessing and annotating papers be useful?**

3.3 E-Learning

3.3.1 We have previously explored the use of E-Learning for member training and induction, but it was decided that this would not be taken forward at the time.

3.3.2 The LGA have a range of online learning packages which are free of charge, some of which are listed below:

- Community engagement and leadership
- Commissioning of services
- The Effective Ward Councillor

- Data Protection for Councillors
- Licensing and regulation
- Influencing skills

3.3.3 In order to provide flexibility and alternative mediums of training delivery, E-Learning modules and remote Webinar type training could be developed and offered in-house. Any online mode of training would be compatible with devices issued to members. Using Web based training modules would allow Members to carry out the training at a time which is convenient to them, it also allows Members the opportunity to revisit modules at a later date to refresh their knowledge and understanding.

Questions

3.3.4 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- Do you support the use of on line training?
- Are there specific types of training which Members feel would lend itself to online training?
- Are there any difficulties which may be encountered by offering online training mediums?

3.4 Paperlite

3.4.1 In 2015 Members were asked to “Opt-in” to receiving paper agenda’s. This corresponded with the launch of the Modern.gov application which can be used to view and annotate Council papers. Progressively more and members have opted back in to receiving hard copies of meeting papers.

3.4.2 With a view to reducing costs and the impact on the environment, the Council is looking towards reducing the costs associating with printing hard copy documents. We are also committed to ensuring that this does not disadvantage anyone with specific requirements and of course will continue to facilitate the provision of accessible format papers for those who need them.

3.4.3 We understand that Members like to annotate papers, the development of an enhanced Modern.gov application, will provide enhanced features which will make annotating electronic copies of papers much easier.

Questions

3.4.4 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Should Members have to opt in to receiving papers, making the default position that hard copies will not be provided?**
- **What additional support might Members need if they were to opt out of receiving hard copy papers?**

3.5 Mentoring

3.5.1 Feedback from some new members has indicated that the availability of a mentoring scheme would have been helpful to them when first elected as a councillor.

3.5.2 We are aware other councils do this and the way in which it typically works is that it is a political party initiative rather than being Council led, with Group Leaders nominating Members within their groups to mentor new members. The LGA do have a mentoring scheme and a LGA handbook on Councillor Mentoring is also available. More informal schemes can also be arranged and training on being a mentor can be sourced.

3.5.3 Questions

Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Would the creation of a mentoring scheme for new Members be a good way of supporting new members?**

3.6 Role Descriptions

3.6.1 It is proposed that Role Descriptions be developed in order to assist members who are appointed to roles with special responsibilities and also to ensure that other members are aware of the remit, scope and jurisdiction of these roles.

3.6.2 We currently have role descriptions for Scrutiny Chairman and Chair of Scrutiny Commission other role profiles that may be developed might include:

- Chairman of Audit and Risk
- Chairman of Planning and Licensing
- Cabinet Member
- Chairman of the Council

3.6.3 Questions

Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Would it be useful to have role profiles for key Councillor Roles?**
- **If so which roles should have a profile?**

3.7 Members Handbook

3.7.1 Historically a folder has been issued to members in paper format with operational information such as relevant telephone numbers, floor plans, training information and Directorate Structure Charts. It is proposed that the Member Handbook be created in electronic format kept on a platform which is easily accessible. This will enable the handbook to be updated regularly to ensure that information remains current.

3.7.2 Members could be provided with a hard copy Induction Booklet. This would include the Induction Training Programme and a summary of key information

which may be required in the first few days/weeks following the election.

Questions

3.7.3 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **With reference to the proposed contents list for the handbook (Appendix B) should any additional information be included?**
- **Do Members envisage any problems with the provision of the Members Handbook in electronic format?**
- **Would it be useful to provide a hard copy induction booklet to guide members through their first few weeks?**

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019 - 2023

4.1 External Training Providers - Ad-Hoc Events

4.1.1 There are currently a range of external training providers which provide a variety of training mediums including East Midlands Councils, The Centre for Public Scrutiny, Institute of Local Government Studies, Local Government Association and other specialist training providers.

4.1.2 Historically Members have received notification of training from these organisations by email and any requests to attend would come to Governance. It has been normal practice to obtain Group Leader approval where relevant. Governance then make all arrangements for booking on the course and any travel arrangements and will forward confirmation to the Member. Fees are paid from the Member Training Budget.

4.1.3 Where role specific training is available, this will be brought to the attention of members through the relevant officer - the Statutory Scrutiny Officer for example will be aware of current training/events being offered by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and would bring these to the attention of Scrutiny Commission.

Questions

4.1.4 Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:

- **Do Members currently receive enough information about external training?**
- **Could the procedure for booking on external training courses be improved?**

4.2 Ongoing Training

4.2.1 It is proposed that all committees receive regular training and updates in the form of training and briefings held in short (no longer than one hour) training sessions held before meetings. This method of training and continuous development is already currently used for the Audit and Risk Committee.

4.2.2 The Chair of the Committee would decide on a programme of training sessions in

consultation with their members and the lead officer at the start of each Municipal Year. Some flexibility would be built into these programme to allow for any additional training which arises out of policy changes or particular focus areas arising from local circumstances.

4.2.3 Following the concentrated Member development that is built into the induction programme, there will also be an ongoing training development plan which will include a range of training mediums and providers. Such ongoing training may include for example:

- Planning and Licensing Training and Briefings
- Planning Policy Briefings
- Scrutiny Training
- Councillor Skills Training (e.g. Reading Reports, Effective Challenge, Personal Resilience etc...)
- Code of Conduct Training and Briefings
- Briefings in relation to reports coming forward on the Forward Plan

Questions

- **Following the induction what types of ongoing training would be beneficial?**
- **Do Members feel that short training session before committee meetings (as described above) would be useful?**

4.3 Member Development Group

4.3.1 The creation of a Member Development Working Group would enable the Member Development Plan was reviewed regularly in order that it adapts to the needs of Members in line with emerging developments in policy and practice. This could be a newly constituted group or could become part of the scope of the existing Constitution Review Working Group.

4.3.2 The group would look at both external training providers and in-house provision in order to manage the Members Training Budget to provide the best possible training offer in line with the requirements of members.

Questions

4.3.3 **Members are asked to provide answers and feedback on the following:**

- **Do Members feel it would be beneficial to have a Members Development Group?**
- **Would this be better as a function of the Constitution Review Working Group or would it be more appropriate to form a separate Group?**

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Proposals have been drafted to reflect feedback that has been provided by Members following their induction.
- 5.2 It is the intention that this paper be circulated to all Members in order that all Members are provided with the time and opportunity to consider the proposals and provide feedback.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain feedback on proposed methods of delivering the Member Induction and Development Programme. It may be necessary to consider alternative options following feedback from Members.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All costs in relation to Member Development and Induction would be paid for out of the Member Development Budget which is currently £5000.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Members have a key role in strategic decision making and it is essential that they have the skills and expertise to support them in their role.
- 8.2 Members must be made aware of their statutory duties and obligations in relation to the role of County Councillor.
- 8.3 It is vital that changes in law and policy, as well as changes in local circumstances are communicated to Members in a clear, and timely manner in order to facilitate the ability of members to carry out their duties and serve their communities in an appropriate and effective way.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed.

11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications.

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Members feedback will be important in ensuring that the induction and ongoing development plan is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of Members.

14 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None

15 APPENDICES

15.1 Appendix A - Table of Member Induction Training

15.2 Appendix B - Handbook Contents List

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.