

Decision maker:	Cabinet member: health and wellbeing
Decision date:	11 August 2017
Title of report:	Members' induction programme
Report by:	Democratic services officer

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To approve the members' induction programme.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) that the outline members' induction programme at appendix 1 is approved.**

Alternative options

- 1 No members' induction programme is in place. This is not recommended as returning and new members need details of what information will be available in the first few weeks following the Herefordshire Council elections or by elections.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 A members' induction programme will set out the arrangements which will be put in place for any new and/or returning members so that they are aware of the requirements following their election as a ward councillor.
- 3 The programme will also assist officers to put in place a detailed plan in order to deliver the programme.

Key considerations

- 4 Following the 2015 local elections, a cross party working group was set up in order to inform the development of an updated induction programme. The working group consists of councillors:
 - PM Morgan
 - PA Andrews
 - WLS Bowen
 - CR Butler
 - MN Mansell
 - FM Norman
 - CA North
- 5 Following feedback from new and returning members, the working group felt that there needed to be more information available pre-election so that prospective candidates have a clear understanding of the time commitment involved, especially if they decide that they would like to serve on a committee. It was also felt that group leaders had a key role to play in ensuring that candidates understood clearly the likely time commitment
- 6 The post-election induction programme is split into the following main areas:
 - Day 1 – all members to be recommended to attend in order that their acceptance of office and declaration of interest forms are completed. On the same day, ID badges and ICT equipment be issued.
 - Week 1 and 2 - sessions to be arranged to explain the roles and responsibilities of councillors and council processes. Several sessions offered on different days and times will be arranged to accommodate all member commitments.
 - Week 3 and onwards – monthly briefing and events are arranged as requested or when new relevant information becomes available.
- 7 The working group felt that the each session would need to be run a minimum of twice in order that those members who had prior commitments (such as work) would have the opportunity to attend sessions and to meet other councillors. It should however be noted that attendance at non-mandatory training sessions is poor with less than a quarter of members attending and two training sessions will only be run if there is a demand.
- 8 It has previously been agreed at Council that members will complete mandatory training within three months of being elected. The mandatory training modules are:
 - Roles and responsibilities (including code of conduct);
 - Development management;
 - Regulatory;

- Corporate parenting;
- Children's safeguarding;
- Adults safeguarding;
- Information governance;
- Diversity.

- 9 The feedback from members that training needed to be appropriate to councillors and delivered in a range of different time slot and methods. If members are unable to attend the training arranged, copies of the information provided will be sent to them.

Community impact

- 10 The code of corporate governance sets out that the council is committed to maintaining high standards of corporate governance in order to achieve the council's vision of "people, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and wellbeing for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire". One of the 7 principles underpinning the code of corporate governance is to develop the leadership and individuals capacity within the council . This principle is supported by ensuring members have access to adequate training on taking up office

Equality duty

- 11 Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:

"A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

- 12 The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes. The induction programme includes training for members to ensure they are aware of the duties imposed under the Act and have the skills necessary to take informed decisions

Financial implications

- 13 Induction training and development will be provided by in-house staff within existing governance budgets.
- 14 The current rate for newly elected members is £5,567 and upon completion of the mandatory training rises to £7,423. The higher rate of members' allowances has been accounted for within existing budgets.

Legal implications

- 15 There is no statutory requirement for training to be undertaken. However the council's current scheme of allowances conditions receipt of the higher rate of basic allowance on completion of mandatory training.

Risk management

- 16 There is a risk that if members are not fully aware of their responsibilities once elected, the decision made by members may be challenged or may not be in accordance with good decision making.
- 17 There is a risk that if support is not available to members then prospective candidates may not stand for elections.
- 18 If the outline programme is approved, then the above two risks are mitigated.

Consultees

- 19 The working group consulted their political parties and the feedback from those conversations have shaped the induction programme. A summary of the survey results is attached as appendix 2.
- 20 Group leaders have been consulted on the proposals in line with the constitution.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – outline induction programme.

Appendix 2 – summary of members survey results.

Background papers

- None identified.