

Member Support Steering Group

27 November 2014

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Induction Strategy & Programme 2015/2016

Summary

1. This report sets out the first draft of the induction strategy and programme for newly elected Members during 2015/16.

Background

2. For the last District Election in 2011 the Council had recently been awarded Charter Status for Member Development and was required to develop a detailed strategy document ahead of the induction programme being rolled out to newly elected members. Whilst the Council no longer holds Charter Status for Member Development, the 2015/16 strategy and programme will draw on the work undertaken in 2011 to develop an induction strategy and programme for 2015/16 which is more fitting to the budgets and resources presently available. In line with the Council's agreed Member Training & Development Policy, having an induction programme for newly elected members is one of the key elements and complements the general Core Programme of training and development activities available for all Members annually.
3. Attached at Annex A to this report is the first draft of the Induction Strategy/Programme for comment. Wherever possible, internal trainers will be used, to maximize knowledge and experience available within City of York Council and to keep external costs to a minimum. However, as in any Induction year, there will be some training for which external trainers will be required. The programme will be revised as we progress towards the 2015 election but the idea is to produce a simple package for the newly elected Member.

Induction Strategy/Programme 2015/2016

4. The overriding aim of this Induction Strategy must be to provide the core essential knowledge to newly elected Members as quickly and cost effective as possible in an informative but enjoyable way.

Providing the right support to new Members at this time will undoubtedly ease their induction into their role and into the authority. To help get this experience right, the Strategy attached has been developed based on what worked well in previous induction years in York.

5. It is intended that the Programme for newly elected Members will be complemented by the Core Annual Programme of Training/Development activities available to all Members for 2015/16, details of which will follow at a future meeting.
6. By the time of the elections, the Strategy/Programme attached will purely become an Induction Programme.
7. It is anticipated that, based on previous induction years and lessons learnt, the fundamental elements of the **induction strategy** will be:

Candidates Letter – after the deadline for declaration of candidates in early April 2015, a letter will be sent to all candidates with potential dates for induction events to ensure prospective elected Members are able to plan ahead and make themselves available for the induction programme.

Formal Welcome at the Polling Count – successful candidates to be introduced to Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Civic and Democratic Services. Newly Elected Members will also sign their acceptance of office form and, if possible, be given access and appropriate log ins to Council systems;.

A Members Welcome Pack – at the 2011 election, newly elected members were provided with a substantial 'Being a York Councillor Guide' which proved costly to produce. It is anticipated that for 2015 an introductory pack of key information will be provided upon election. This could include an essential directory of key contacts and information relating to the role of a Councillor which is vital to the early weeks of being in post .

An induction event – This will be an opportunity to meet the Council's Management Team and learn briefly from Directors about their responsibilities. It is hoped that some of the Council's more experienced Members will also be in attendance to provide some insight.

One to One with Democratic Services Staff – An opportunity to discuss the care, support and entitlements available. This will also act as an early discussion to identify individual needs and to introduce the Core Programme, together with a range of induction workshops in essential skills and statutory roles (ie. licensing, planning, local government finance)

Familiarisation Tour of West Offices – to enable the new Councillor to get used to the building and be set up with key photo identification.

Key Contacts – every newly elected Member will be encouraged to develop a network of key contacts within the organisation to help them get established. Initially, they will be given the name of a member of Democratic Services staff to help guide them to the appropriate wider contacts.

IT Drop In Sessions – Democratic Services staff will be available at set times to show new Members around the Council's intranet, how to use Outlook and solve any other basic IT problems. Further training can be arranged if required.

Induction Training– There will be sessions and/or guidance on key areas such as the Code of Conduct, scrutiny, equalities and acting as community leaders in the ward.

8. **Scrutiny Review on Equalities and Democratic Engagement**

A recent Scrutiny Task Group on 'equalities and democratic engagement', looked specifically at what training Members, new and experienced, required in order to embed equalities issues and achieve a wider demographic in terms of democratic engagement. For the first time, this induction strategy will be able to address those areas. The Scrutiny Task Group recommended:

- (i) The induction package should include 'ward demographics/profiles and information on the Joint Service Needs Assessment at ward level';
- (ii) Mandatory training for all Members on corporate equalities and on issues at ward level;
- (iii) Training for all Members on Community Impact Assessments

As the induction strategy and work unfolds, consideration will be given, working with relevant officers, as to the best means of delivering these needs.

'Working with Members'

The Council has contracted an external provider to deliver a one-off tester course for senior officers aimed at breaking down and understanding the relative roles of officers and Members. Now that the Council is largely in one building, this is to help officers coming into closer contact with Members to understand the role differentials and appropriate behaviours.

There is, however, an opportunity through the induction package to apply some joint skills learning with both Members and Officers. Initial discussions are planned with the existing learning providers to explore the possibility of some joint sessions to equip new Members and Officers with the appropriate skills and mutual understanding of the respective Member and Officer roles.

Support & Facilities

9. Induction is not only concerned with training of course but ensuring newly elected Councillors have the right support and facilities to allow them to carry out their new role effectively. For instance, information on pay, pensions, travel and subsistence and dependent carer's allowance, as well as any specific individual support needs.

It is suggested that early work commences with election candidates to identify any specific support needs, as soon as candidates are formally declared in April 2015.

10. The Steering Group will be aware of previous proposals to introduce a new 'Membersphere' to provide Members with a single site from which to access and communicate key information quickly. Despite the delays arising from Cabinet Office requirements relating to the Public Sector Network, it is hoped that this will still be available as a site for the benefit of all Members, but specifically aiding newly elected Members, as from May 2015.
11. Since the last District Elections in 2011, the Members Bulletin has been introduced to provide a simple vehicle by which to let Members have, every fortnight, key snippets of information, helpful to their roles. This is a support tool which will continue to be available as part of the coming induction and beyond, subject, of course, to the review being conducted by this Steering Group, separately on this agenda.

Consultation

12. Consultation will take place on the draft Induction Strategy with Group Leaders and Council Management Team on the delivery of a suitable induction programme, and will, of course, be ongoing with this Steering Group. In the meantime, consultation is underway with both the Workforce Development and Neighbourhoods Services Teams to combine resources and deliver a targeted and effective induction package.

Options

13. (a) to endorse Annex A as the draft Induction Strategy and Programme for newly elected Members post the District Elections in May 2015;
- (b) to suggest any revisions to the draft Induction Strategy/Programme, prior to the final draft.

Council Plan

14. Having well informed and trained Members will continue to help the Council deliver its key priorities set out within its current and any new Council Plan for the ensuing four years after the District Elections.

Implications

15. The following implications have been considered:
 - **Financial** – Whilst many of the financial costs associated with the Induction Programme 2015/2016 will be met from the existing budget available for Member Development in 2015/16, it may be necessary for the Council to supplement the cost of induction, given that the overall member development budget has, in recent years, been reduced to £5k. Where possible, internal staff expertise will be used to deliver training and guidance to newly elected Members in order to keep costs to a minimum. However, there may be some sessions which it is suggested are delivered externally for reasons of independence; reputation and authenticity. Those fine details will become clearer as arrangements proceed.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – Any HR issues arising from the programme relate to trainers & staff support for events, as well as the preparation and delivery of the induction package
 - **Equalities** - There are no equality implications associated with the recommendations in this report other than the need to induct new Members on their corporate equalities responsibilities. Paragraph 8 above sets out the recommendations of a recent Scrutiny Task Group in relation to these issues and what might be included within this induction.
 - **Legal** – There are no known legal implications associated with this report.

- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no known crime and disorder implications associated with this report.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – Any IT implications associated with this report relate to the provision of IT training to new Members.
- **Property** – There are no known property implications associated with this report
- **Other** – There are no other implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

16. If Members do not adopt an effective Induction Strategy and provide a robust induction package for newly elected Members, there is a risk that those newly elected Members will not be given the appropriate ‘tools’ and skills to represent their communities successfully and will not participate, effectively, in good decision making on behalf of the Council.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that the first draft Induction strategy and package for 2015/16, be noted and Members provide any comments for consideration and development.

Reason

18. To enable arrangements for the delivery of a planned induction programme for 2015/2016 to commence.

Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**



Date 20.11.15

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None.

Annexes:

Annex A – Induction Strategy/Programme 2015/16