
Member Support Steering Group

12th March 2015

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Update - Induction Strategy & Programme 2015/2016

Summary

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

Background

2. At the Member Support Steering Group meeting of November 2014, Members were presented with a draft induction strategy and Programme for comment. Attached at Annex A is a draft final induction strategy for further comment ahead of it being considered by Council Management Team and Group Leaders.. Attached at Annex B is an update on the content of the induction programme which is informed by the strategy.

Induction Strategy/Programme 2015/2016

3. The overriding aim of this induction strategy must be to provide the core essential knowledge to newly elected Members as quickly and as cost effectively 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.
4. It is intended that the Programme for newly elected Members will be complemented by the Core Annual Programme of Training/Development for 2015/16 which will provide a way of refreshing the learning of returned Members. Further details of the Core Programme which will follow at a future meeting. In the meantime, re-elected Members will be encouraged to participate in some of the induction events offered. These will, of course, include the statutory training on planning, licensing and appeals and refreshers on the Code of Conduct, Member Officer Relations Protocol and elements of the programme which are in response to

the Local Government Association (LGA) recommendations on Member behaviour in York. Council Management Team and Group Leaders, alike, are keen to ensure that the Induction and Core Programme for the coming year provide opportunities to help Members, new and returning, to develop the knowledge, skills and experience to improve overall behavioural standards and address some of the findings of the LGA review.

Support & Facilities

5. Induction is not only concerned with training 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 their roles, allowances, entitlements and the way the Council works , 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. This approach was taken in 2011, extremely successfully, allowing new Councillors with very specific needs to settle in more effectively.

6. 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. The latest phase of Membersphere will shortly be available for testing by Members and the Steering Group will be approached in the first instance to be involved in any trials. Democratic Services Officers are currently being trained on how to add content. Cross reference to Members induction will appear on the 'sphere'. So, Members will be able to find key information quickly on the 'sphere' under the guidance tab.
7. Throughout the induction strategy process it has been identified that the Council is lacking a way in which to capture specific learning needs identified by new Members individually, now that the Council has discontinued its former practice of Personal Development Plans for Members. The Steering Group is being asked to consider whether it would endorse the use of a 'coaching' form, as presented at a meeting in 2014, as a means in which Officers can record and progress anymore specific individual training and development requests. A pro-forma PDP form will be tabled at the meeting for consideration.

Consultation

12. Consultation will take place on the final draft induction strategy with Group Leaders and Council Management Team on the delivery of the induction programme, and comments from this Steering Group have also been taken into account. Consultation is also 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 final draft induction strategy and Annex B as the programme for newly elected Members post the District Elections in May 2015;
- (b) to suggest any revisions to the draft final Induction Strategy and Programme, prior to implementation.

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** – during the budget process for 2015/16, the Council agreed to top up the existing core budget for Member training by an additional £5k for 2015/16. That means that, for the coming year alone, a total of £10k is available for Member induction and core programme. To date, approximately £6,400 has been committed on external training to provide the skills necessary to develop Members who are both caring, confident decision makers and advocates and leaders of their communities. Where possible, internal staff expertise is still being used to deliver statutory and local practical learning and guidance, keeping costs to a minimum.
 - **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 and to reflect the mandatory requirement for all Members to receive and engage in equalities and diversity training. In pursuance of this, the Chair of this Group has met with Councillor Fitzpatrick, who has specifically been asked to champion these important areas.. An external trainer has been engaged to deliver training to all Members on equalities and diversity as part of a full development day on essential core skills, which the Council has commissioned. See Annex B attached.
- **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. Details are set out in Annex B to this report.
- **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 final draft Induction strategy and package for 2015/16, be approved and Members provide any comments for consideration and development ahead of its implementation.

Reason

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

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**Report
Approved**



Date 5/03/2015

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
Annex B – Induction Programme