

Standards Committee - 26 January 2015

Training for Elected Members 2015/16

Summary of Report

This report sets out proposals for members training during 2015/16 which will be open to all elected members.

Recommendations

- (1) That the content of the report be noted
- (2) That the Committee are requested to consider whether there are any further areas of training which could be included in the programme.

Resource Considerations:

None arising from this report.

Financial:

It is anticipated the majority of the training offered will be conducted in house and that training will take place at council venues, therefore there are no financial implications associated for with this report save for officer time in preparing for an delivering the training.

It is noted Democratic Services have a modest budget which can be used for external training during this municipal year as and when necessary.

Legal:

None arising from this report

Staffing:

None arising from this report

Citizen Impact:

None arising from this report

Community Safety:

None arising from this report

Environmental:

None arising from this report

Performance and Risk Management:

The risk of members not being trained could lead to unsafe decision making

Performance Management:

None arising from this report

Equality Implications:

This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equality and diversity

Consultation:

None arising from this report

Background papers

All published

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Cox', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'A' and 'C'.

Signed:

Tony Cox
Head of Legal & Democratic Services and
Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 January 2015

Contact Officer

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Report

In the 2013 Councillor's Guide entitled "Finding your Way", members induction is noted as being a way to familiarise members with their new role and how the Council works by being introduced to the people they need to know, understanding the Council's legal framework and being shown where and how to access information that is available to all members irrespective of their political persuasion.

As part of the development of a new Member Induction Programme, officers have undertaken secondary research comparing and contrasting induction programmes delivered to new members from West Midlands Councils (ie: Solihull Council, Sandwell Council, Dudley Council, Wolverhampton Council and Birmingham Council) as well as other authorities (such as: Norfolk Council, Gloucester Council, Liverpool Council and Suffolk Council).

A common thread was found when analysing these programmes – in addition to an overview of the complete democratic process; meet and greet sessions, Overview and Scrutiny and Safeguarding feature in almost all of the programmes delivered.

In order to get some perspective of members experience of their Induction Programmes officers undertook primary research contacting twenty four members and asked them eight questions which looked at their experiences when they were first elected to the authority.

A total of eight members responded. During the analysis six reoccurring comments were found; new members could benefit from spending time with their Group Leader and more experienced members, officers from Communications could brief newly elected members on media/social media, newly elected members would find details of key officers useful, an explanation of how the Council operates would be useful, newly elected members could be formally introduced to and have some time diarised with senior officers and newly elected members could benefit from a full tour of the Council House/Civic Centre to familiarise themselves with the civic buildings.

From the analysis we propose a new Induction Programme for newly elected members in May to cover the following key sessions:

- Overview of the Democratic Process (delivered by Legal & Democratic Services)
- Meeting with Group Leader (to welcome them to the authority)
- Meet CMT/Senior Managers
- The Decision Making Process (the Executive and Scrutiny)(delivered by Legal & Democratic Services)
- Safeguarding (delivered by Children and Adults)

- Media/Social Media (delivered by Communications)
- Area Panels (delivered by Communities and Public Protection)

In addition the authority has a number of e-learning packages available through 'Learning Pool' which are accessible to members covering subjects such as:

- Your role as Councillor
- Code of Conduct
- Protecting Information Level I
- Equality & Diversity
- Working with the Media

Officers are also in the process of developing a 'mini training programme' of four separate sessions which will be open to all elected members which are planned for March and April covering the separate subject areas of:

- Safeguarding Adults and Children (delivered by Safeguarding Officers from Social Care and Children's Services)
- Licensing (delivered by officers from Licensing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
- Media/Social Media (delivered by officers from Communications)
- Emergency Planning (delivered by officers from the Emergency Planning Unit).