

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Standards Committee**

**21 July 2023**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Councillor Induction Programme</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mike Gledhill – Leader of the Council</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sally Hampton – Senior Democratic Services Officer</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Non specific</b>

**Appendix 1 – Councillor Induction Programme**

**1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Councillor Induction Programme launched after the elections in May 2023.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

**3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 The Councillor Induction Programme was developed in line with best practice and taking into account the priority areas for members' training and feedback received following the induction programme held in 2019.

**4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Providing effective training and development opportunities for councillors is integral to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.

**5. Alternative Options**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Council's constitution, some elements of the induction programme are essential for members to be able to serve on particular committees. Additional seminars have been included as set out in para 6.3 of this report.

Mark Trillo  
**Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)**

**Web Links and  
Background Papers**

None

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**6. Detail**

- 6.1 The aim of the Councillors' Induction Programme is to ensure that Councillors are supported to deliver the Council's statutory and corporate obligations, objectives and priorities and are provided with the tools and information required to fulfil their roles.
- 6.2 The Councillors' Induction Programme 2023 is delivering a programme of learning and development opportunities and was developed prior to the local elections in conjunction with the Member Development Working Group. The programme takes into account the priority areas for the Council, feedback received following the Corporate Peer Challenge, the Review of Scrutiny and 2019 induction process as well as learnings from best practice. The full programme is attached at Appendix 1.
- 6.3 The following sessions have also been included in this year's programme, for the reasons as set out below:
- Effective Overview and Scrutiny – as recommended by the review conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This will focus on questioning techniques to encourage engagement and support for committee chairs.
  - Partnership Working – added following a recommendation from the Corporate Peer Challenge - "this would provide the opportunity to demonstrate further the uniqueness of each place and enable effort and resource from across partner organisations to coalesce around shared priorities".
  - The Council's approach to tackling climate change – this was ranked as a high priority following a survey of councillors in 2022.
- 6.4 Priority areas for member training, such as training in regulatory matters (including Planning Applications Committee), have already been delivered to enable members to participate on those committees. Bite size briefings have been provided at the start of each scrutiny panel meeting to provide information on the scrutiny panel and scrutiny process within the Council's decision-making structure, together with an overview of the role and remit of each committee. A similar briefing around the Standards Committee will be provided at the start of this meeting.

- 6.5 Meetings have taken place with the Chairs of the newly created sub-committees to set out their remit and introduce the Heads of Service nominated to support these committees.
- 6.6 All town / parish councillors, clerks and Independent Persons were invited to attend the Code of Conduct Training, there are two sessions, one of which took place on 8 June and the other is scheduled for 13 September 2023. The Independent Member was also invited to attend the Audit & Accounts Committee – Core Functions Seminar.
- 6.7 Other areas which would more generally benefit councillors' roles in the community, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Safeguarding and Emergency Planning, are planned for later in the programme.
- 6.8 All newly elected councillors from across the country were invited to attend the LGA National Welcome Event which was held virtually on 20 June. The event provided an introduction to the LGA and the support available to newly elected members and there was the opportunity to:
- explore the national challenges facing councils
  - hear from experienced councillors on their top tips to equip you in your new role
  - have a breakout session with councillors from the same LGA political group as you.
- 6.9 New and returning councillors are invited to attend a 'Six Months In' session on 24 October 2023 in Birmingham to:
- explore the role of councillor
  - learn about the evolving national policy context and challenges facing councils
  - hear from experienced councillors
  - network with colleagues from other councils
  - discover what LGA support is on offer
- 6.10 Representatives of the LGA attended the Welcome Meeting and will also be delivering a session of Chairing Skills training together with a LGA Peer on 7 November 2023.
- 6.11 Information and resources are available via the Councillors' Portal including online training and a comprehensive range of workbooks produced by the Local Government Association and members are encouraged to access these materials independently. Updated information around ward profiles taking into account data from the 2021 Census is also available via the Councillors' Portal.
- 6.12 The majority of sessions are organised internally and delivered by officers, as this method has previously proved to be the most cost effective and feedback from councillors supports the use of in-house expertise. This year some sessions are being delivered via Teams to enable sessions to be recorded and

made available for councillors to view at a later time. Some sessions are also being delivered virtually on an Alliance wide basis, which reduces costs and contributes to the Alliance's Climate Change agenda.

- 6.13 Members are requested to complete evaluation forms after each session. Scores and comments will be compiled and circulated to each course provider to be used to inform the structure and content of future courses. To date, most sessions have been well attended and feedback received is positive. Additional training has been offered for less well attended sessions or one-to-one sessions have been arranged with individual councillors. A full evaluation will be undertaken at the conclusion of the Induction Programme.
- 6.14 Councillor Dylan Pascall has been appointed as the Member Development Champion to lead the Member Development Working Group. This Group will consider a full evaluation of the Induction Programme and will develop a programme of training and development opportunities for all councillors that is updated on a rolling basis with activities identified through a variety of channels.
- 6.15 All new Councillors have been provided with IT equipment to enable them to fulfil their roles and training is provided on an on-going basis. There is a rolling programme to replace returning councillors' IT equipment.
- 6.16 The Overview and Scrutiny Programming Group, together with the Leader and Member Development Champion, will monitor the on-going programme of learning and development opportunities for members to commence at the conclusion of the Induction Programme.