



## **COUNCIL – 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022**

**SUBJECT: MEMBERS INDUCTION 2022**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The report outlines the proposed induction programme for newly elected and returning Councillors following the local government elections in May 2022.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The work of a Councillor is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Communities have high expectations of their elected representatives from the day of their election and throughout their period of office. It is therefore essential to be able to quickly and successfully navigate the different aspects of local government. This report outlines the importance of induction and presents a draft induction programme for approval.
- 2.2 The Induction Programme and considered by the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 who unanimously recommended its approval to Council.
- 2.3 Members of the Democratic Services Committee requested that further detail be included in the description of the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Seminar – Member Support and Working in a Digital Environment to clearly outline the subjects being covered and this has been updated in the programme attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Since the programme was considered by the Democratic Services Committee the order of two planned sessions have been changed to facilitate a request from the Head of Housing for a special meeting of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022. To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee Members appointed at the AGM receive this mandatory training prior to this meeting, the Introduction to Scrutiny Induction Session will be brought forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and the Equalities and Diversity Induction Session will now take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (subject to confirmation from the facilitator).

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### 3.1 That Council: -

- (i) Note the comments of the Democratic Services Committee; and
- (ii) Approve the Updated Member Induction Programme 2022 (Appendix 1).

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To support newly elected and returning Councillors understand their roles and responsibilities as elected Members

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 An induction programme is an important development opportunity as it enables Councillors to quickly become familiar with how the council works, the rules and procedures under which it operates and the complexities of the elected member role.
- 5.2 The proposed induction programme (Appendix 1) will be delivered over the first few months of the new Council term and will provide Members with an opportunity to clearly establish their roles and responsibilities and to build positive working relationships with Officers from the outset. The programme has been designed to highlight key council information and its policies and procedures which should enable Councillors to actively and rapidly participate in the business of council, increasing their confidence in their ability to make informed and effective decisions from the start of their term of office. The draft Induction Programme has been informed by the [WLG A Competency Framework](#) and will also tie into the wider Members Training and Development Programme that will run for a 2-year period following the election.
- 5.3 To support the induction programme an electronic Members Information Pack will also be produced and will include a timetable of meetings, links to core policies and procedures, frequently asked questions and useful contact numbers and will be distributed to Members when they sign the Acceptance of Office register and collect their IT Equipment. Paper copies will also be made available on request. It is also proposed to circulate a copy of the Induction Programme as agreed by Council to prospective candidates in advance of the elections as an awareness raising exercise.

#### **Overview of the Induction Programme**

##### **Presentation and Directorate Show Case 'Your Council'**

- 5.4 The programme will commence on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 with a 'Directorate Show Case' Exhibition and Presentation. Our aim is to add additional value to the Show Cases and Induction Training Sessions by providing a live event to those Members wishing to connect remotely. However, the provision of the live event connection will depend on the progress of the refit of the Penallta House meeting rooms required to facilitate the provision of multi-location meetings. The Presentation from the Chief Executive will provide an overview of the key roles and functions of the Council, its Officers and Members, which will include organisational values and behaviours. The Show Cases will provide Members with the opportunity to find out more about the Councils' services and meet Senior Officers as well as other Councillors. Corporate Directors and Heads of Service will be in attendance and provide Members with

useful point of contact information and an organisational chart of their service area.

Each meeting room will host a Corporate Directorate, where the services provided will be highlighted, Rhymney Room will host Corporate Services and Education, the Sirhowy Room will host the Economy and Environment Directorate and the Ebbw Room will host Social Services and Housing.

As we need to plan these activities now but cannot know the position in terms of COVID 19 in May 2022, it is felt that the Showcase Exhibition as run in 2017 would not be appropriate to duplicate given continuing uncertainties. The proposed committee room 'Show Case' set up also helps to support staff that maybe utilising the agile working hubs throughout the day as it would minimise disruption this area of the building.

### **Mandatory Induction**

- 5.5 The Mandatory Induction seminars presented are considered to be essential and encompass Members' statutory responsibilities and regulatory committee membership. These seminars will include Code of Conduct and Governance Arrangements, Information Governance and Data Protection, Licensing and Planning and Equalities and Diversity and will be delivered before the full committee cycle begins.

### **Recommended Induction**

- 5.6 The Recommended Induction seminars presented are considered to be important but not essential and include Smart and Safe Working Practices, which will look at Social Media and managing an on-line presence and hints, tips on working safely in the community and help provided to support mental health and work life balance; Introduction to Finance which will explain where the Council gets its funding and help Members to understand financial terminology, budget setting and medium term financial planning.

Part of the feedback that we received on the 2017 Induction Programme was that Members felt there was not enough information on the different directorates and how they worked. We have taken these comments on board and have incorporated a series of Introductory Sessions that will be facilitated by each Corporate Director and will provide Members with more detail on that Directorate's areas of responsibility, projects and plans coming forward.

The Recommended Induction programme also includes a series of mini 'Introduction to Committee' training sessions. All new Councillors, along with the committee membership, will be encouraged to attend these sessions which will explain the terms of reference for that committee, introduce them to the Officers they are likely to see on a regularly basis and take them through any decision-making considerations or appeal processes that they need to take into account. Newly elected Members will also be encouraged to attend and observe meetings if possible as an induction activity.

### **5.7 Wider Induction Process**

As the end of the year progresses Members Seminars will incorporate topics that will introduce Partnership organisations such as the Gwent Public Services Board, and

the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and will also inform Members of their commitments as part of their wider Councillor role such as Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Unconscious Bias and Protected Characteristics.

- 5.8 It should be noted that there may need to be minor date and or facilitator changes to the attached induction programme, and the subsequent Members Support and Development Programme depending on facilitator availability. Where such changes are required, we will notify Members in advance.

### **After Induction - Training Needs Analysis – Requested Training**

- 5.9 During December 2022-January 2023 a training needs analysis questionnaire will be compiled and distributed. Members' responses will be analysed and from this the 2023-2025 Members Support and Development Programme will be developed which will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee for approval prior to its recommendation to Council.
- 5.10 We will continue to offer a mix of tutor led training sessions physical and online sessions, e-learning modules and seminars. As always, we will continue to support Members individual training requests within budgetary constraints.

### **5.11 Conclusion**

The proposed induction programme will provide the best footing possible for newly elected Councillors as well as updating and informing returning Councillors. Allowing them to embrace roles and responsibilities with confidence and hit the ground running.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Induction Programme 2022 forms part of the Council's commitment to Diversity in Democracy as it has been developed in line with the Diversity in Democracy Action Plan by providing training opportunities via multiple media and at staggered times. Sessions have been designed to ensure that Councillors are valued, developed and supported.

[Link to Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Costs associated with the Induction Programme will be met from the Council's existing Members' training budget provisions

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The administration of the programme means additional tasks for the Democratic Services staff, but these will be met through existing budgets.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The Democratic Services Committee considered Members Induction Programme at its meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The views of the Committee are outlined below.
- 10.2 A Member requested that further detail be included in the description of the induction session on Member Support and Working in a Digital Environment to better reflect the topics being covered. It was felt that this session would be of particular importance to newly elected Councillors, the Member expressed the opinion that this session should be mandatory. The Senior Committee Services Officer confirmed that she would update the programme in line with the Members comments and provided a more in-depth description of the areas that would be covered.
- 10.3 Concerns were raised with regard to connectivity issues and what actions could be taken to resolve the ongoing problems, reference was also made to the age of some of the CCBC routers and their reliability. Officers were aware of a work being done by IT Services into Wi-Fi provision and would make further enquiries on behalf of the Committee. The Committee noted that the upgraded meeting room hardware and new webcasting software might assist, however individual broadband speeds and usage and the impact on connectivity quality would be very difficult to consistently mitigate. The Officer explained that this was due a variety of factors, for example, higher general demand for broadband in evenings, more than one user within a household streaming at the same time as a meeting, area coverage by a particular provider etc. A Member who had opted to use his own broadband provider and access CCBC via vpn commented on the reliability of this method of connection and advised that he had never experienced any connectivity issues.
- 10.4 The Democratic Services Committee fully supported the Induction Programme and emphasised that Members should make every effort attend the sessions. A Member referred to the poor attendance levels at a previously arranged training session, which had been very interesting and hoped to see this improve, given the efforts of Democratic Services staff and Facilitators in providing the sessions.

Having fully considered the report it was moved and seconded that the Democratic Services Committee recommended that Council approve the Members Induction Programme 2022 and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Members Induction Programme 2022.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2001

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S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer)  
Councillor P. Marsden (Leader of Council)  
Councillor C. Mann (Leader of Plaid Cymru Group)  
Councillor K. Etheridge (Leader of Independents Group)  
Councillor M. James (Chair Democratic Services Committee)  
Councillor G. Kirby (Vice Chair Democratic Services Committee)  
Democratic Services Committee

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Updated Induction Programme 2022

Background Papers:

[WLGA Competency Framework](#)