

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: **23 January 2020**

Title: **Member 2019 Induction Review**

Portfolio Area: **Council – Cllr Judy Pearce**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Immediately**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- 1. notes the contents of the review into the 2019 Member Induction Programme and requests that the conclusions (as outlined at Section 3.1) be taken into account in the design of future Programmes; and**
- 2. requests that its future Work Programme be updated to include consideration of the draft 2023 Member Induction Programme.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Following the District Council Elections in May 2019, an Induction Programme for all elected Members of the Council was delivered.
- 1.2 To review the effectiveness of the Programme, a short survey was circulated to all Members for completion and a total of 12 responses were received.
- 1.3 This report presents the findings of the short survey into the 2019 Induction Programme (as outlined at Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 The 2019 Member Induction Programme had been designed in response to some constructive feedback to the May 2015 equivalent Programme.

- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel ultimately approved the draft Member Induction Programme for 2019 at its meeting on 1 November 2018 (Minute O&S 64/18 refers) (subject to delegated authority being granted to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services, in consultation with the Steering Group and Group Leaders, to make any necessary minor amendments);
- 2.3 The Programme was designed to act as both a refresher for re-elected Members and to inform newly elected Members about the operations of the Council and the role and responsibilities of District Councillors;
- 2.4 The Programme ran for approximately three months and aimed to help new (and returning) Members to settle into their roles as quickly and as effectively as possible.

3. Steering Group Views

3.1 In focusing on the results of the Member Feedback on the 2019 Induction Survey, the following conclusions have been reached:

- 12 Member responses to the Survey was somewhat disappointing;
- Overall, the Induction Programme had been well received and a vast improvement on previous versions;
- It is very difficult to strike what was a delicate balance between providing newly elected Members with sufficient information to 'hit the ground running' without overly burdening them with too much information too quickly. There was also recognition that this balance would be different for each Member and was further constrained by the Council employing a shared workforce with West Devon Borough Council;
- Future suggestions for improvements to the Programme included:
 - o Returning Members taking on an increased leadership role in the delivery of the Programme;
 - o Consideration being given to whether or not some sessions should be exclusively for newly elected Members;
 - o In light of a number of comments about the delivery styles of presenting officers, it is intended that an internal 'train the trainer' session be arranged for relevant Council officers;
 - o The possibility of providing key related sessions immediately before each Committee meets for the first time;
 - o That a smaller scale refresher programme be provided six months after the initial induction had concluded.

4. Member Learning and Development Plan

4.1 There is a recognition that Member Learning and Development should not just stop after the initial Induction Programme following an election;

- 4.2 In the demanding and fast changing environment of local government, it is also recognised that Members more than ever before have a responsibility to make sure that they have access to the ongoing Learning and Development opportunities that they need to serve their constituents.
- 4.3 As a result, officers have been tasked with being responsible for the development (and ongoing review) of the Council's Member Learning and Development Plan.
- 4.4 All Members are encouraged to engage in this process and provide their thoughts on all aspects of Member Learning and Development (including future training needs) to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services.

5. Options available and consideration of risk

- 5.1 The key risks arising from this report relate to the failure to provide adequate training, development and/or support to Members. The result of this key risk not being properly addressed could lead to a reduction in the effectiveness of Members in their role and ultimately the democratic decision-making process. This would inevitably harm the Council's relationships with its communities and the reputation of both the Council and individual Members.

6. Proposed Way Forward

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Panel notes the contents of the review into the 2019 Member Induction Programme and requests that the conclusions be taken into account in the design of future Programmes.

7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council Constitution makes frequent reference to the importance of Member training. For example, a Member must have received appropriate planning related training before they can serve on the Development Management Committee.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	Whilst it is anticipated that most Member Learning and Development sessions will be conducted in-house, there is a Member Training budget of £7,500 per annum.
Risk	Y	The risk implications are identified in Section 5 of the report.

Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Council Theme – <i>Efficient and effective</i>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	N/A
Safeguarding	N	N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	N/A
Other implications	N	None

Appendices:

1 – Summary of the 2019 Induction Survey findings (*NB. the appendices that are referred to in this Summary are available upon Member request*).

Background Documents:

Council Constitution;
 Member Induction Survey;
 Member 2019 Induction Programme.