

Committee(s): Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee	Date: 17/07/2024
Subject: Member Induction Arrangements 2025	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	All
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department	N/A
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
Report author(s): Gemma Stokley	

Summary

This report updates the Sub-Committee on the 2025 Member Induction preparations and the proposed programme for new Member induction which will be delivered immediately after the ward elections on 19/20th March 2025 and, thereafter, up until Summer recess 2025.

A range of activities are already underway to support the wider Member Induction Programme, including compilation of a new Member e-Handbook and a programme of high-level and deep-dive briefings that will be made available to all Members. This report sets out more detailed proposals for the weeks, and thereafter the quarter, that immediately follow the elections following the broader overview provided at your last meeting.

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the 2025 Member Induction proposals for the initial few weeks and the first quarter following election as they currently stand. Members are invited to comment on the proposals and offer their views in respect of the proposed timetable and focus for delivery of the initial induction and the following Induction/Refresher programme arrangements.

Main Report

Background – Historic Induction Arrangements

1. The City Corporation's 'all out' Ward elections (in contested wards) will take place on 20th March 2025, and it is proposed that a comprehensive Induction and Refresher programme be offered to all Common Councillors in the quarter after this date (April – June 2025).
2. The induction programme that followed the 2022 Ward elections was very well received by the 37 newly elected Members (a 'turnover' of 37% of Common

Councillors). Due to the positive feedback received by the Town Clerk and the level of Member engagement in the programme after March 2022, by both new and returning Members, the 2025 induction programme intends to follow a similar format and to consider the areas of activity that Members found most useful.

3. In 2022, the Member Induction programme offered Members an appropriate mixture of hybrid briefings that were intended to be helpful and informative to both new and returning Members, although some activities were tailored to the needs of newly elected Members i.e. our initial New Member Induction Briefing.
4. A comprehensive Member Induction Booklet and Key Documents Pack were circulated to all newly elected Members on Induction Day and thereafter sent, via email, to all Members for their general information. The documentation was well received and viewed as a useful guide for all. It is our intention to keep the 2025 Member Induction handbook updated in real time so that this can be used as and when new Members join the Court after March 2025 and be made available at all times on our Members Portal.
5. In addition to the above activities, a supper for newly elected Members, hosted by the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, took place in the Members' Private Dining Room during the Induction period and provided new Members with the opportunity to hear directly from the Policy Chair about his vision and the City Corporation's priorities. It also provided a good forum in which the new Members could share views and learn more about one another. There was very positive feedback following the supper and those Members who raised specific queries received comprehensive responses after the event.
6. The Chief Commoner also hosted an all-Member reception which enabled new and returning Members to get to know one another in a less formal setting.

Work to Date and Next steps

7. In looking at the timetable for delivery of the 2025 Member Induction Programme, the calendar of meetings has been carefully reviewed. The date of the April 2025 Court of Common Council meeting is yet to be confirmed (but will be known by the time of the meeting) and, at present, a fair portion of April 2025 is taken out by the Easter recess period.
8. With that in mind, we wanted to focus specifically on which sessions might be considered most valuable to offer to new and returning Members in the first three weeks following election. The week commencing 24th March will be occupied with New Member Induction Briefings which leaves the w/c 31st March 2025 and 7th April 2025 as a primary focus ahead of April Court and any Committee appointments.
9. Subject to Members' views, the following timetable and activities are therefore proposed immediately after the elections on 20th March 2025:
 - **New Member Induction Briefings** – A choice of sessions on either Monday 24th March (from 4pm), and Wednesday 26th March (from 9am)

- **Fresher's Fayre Event** – To be held ahead of April 2025 first Court meeting – to tie to New Member Induction Briefing events or hold as stand alone event
 - **All-Member Reception** (hosted by the Chief Commoner) – date to be confirmed.
 - **Policy Chair's supper** – date to be confirmed by Policy Chair's Office.
 - **Induction Programme for new and returning Members** – A series of key briefing sessions (hybrid) more deliberately tailored to new Members (e.g. your first Court meeting) will be delivered between 31st March 2025 and 11th April 2025, ahead of the Easter recess period ('Phase 1'). Thereafter, a broader series of hybrid sessions and visits delivered between 6th May 2025 and 25th July 2025.
10. Some thoughts on each aspect of the programme set out above, are detailed in paragraphs 12 to 28 and Members' views are invited so these proposals can be further developed.
11. As has been the case in previous years, we would like to provide candidates with details of the induction arrangements prior to the election so events can be diarised by all in good time in order to ensure maximum engagement. The nomination period for candidates wishing to stand in the 2025 elections opens in the week commencing 17th February 2025 and closes on 25th February 2025. During this period, information packs will be available to anyone considering standing for election. In addition to including details about the induction programme within these packs, we will also refer to the Declaration of Office and the Register of Interest, both of which must be submitted within 28 days of the election. In advance of the nomination timetable, events will be held at Guildhall, to which all potential candidates will be invited to attend and be provided with registers, information packs and guidance. Noting the above timescales, the final 2025 induction programme/offering will therefore ideally be signed off by the Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee in early 2025. The Steering Group is currently scheduled to meet on 30th January 2025.

New Member Induction Briefing and 'Fresher's Fayre' Style Event

12. It is proposed that instead of just one New Member Induction briefing, a choice of sessions be offered in 2025 to better cater for all. These are proposed to take place on Monday 24th March - 4pm onwards and Wednesday 26th March from 9am . We are proposing to hold a 2-3-hour session on each occasion which will provide new Members with key information, signposting and the opportunity to ensure that formal paperwork such as the Members' Code of Conduct are completed. Several practical issues can also helpfully be addressed at this stage such as providing new Members with a tour of the Guildhall complex, specifically the Members' areas; the issuing of security passes; the distribution of IT kit; the allocation of pigeon-holes and robe fittings. New Members will inevitably have a lot of information to digest and much of this can better be provided over a longer period over the proceeding weeks.
13. The format of the New Member Induction Briefing held in 2022 is set out at appendix 1. It is proposed that a similar format be adopted, and discussions are

already underway with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, the Chamberlain, the Comptroller and City Solicitor, the Head of IT, and the Policy Chair about this. We would also welcome the Sub-Committee's views at this stage on format and content.

14. It is proposed that the cost of any food and refreshment for these sessions will be met from the Member Development budget.
15. Officers from the Governance and Member Services Team will support delivery of the Induction Briefings.
16. Based on feedback from the Sub-Committee we will also be exploring the possibility of holding a 'Freshers Fayre' style event either as a stand-alone offer or in the margins of the initial Induction Briefings. Given that it may influence which Committees new Members wish to stand for, it is envisaged that this ideally take place ahead of the April 2025 Court meeting. We would expect all major departments to host a 'stall' setting out what they do, which Committees they report into and information as to key documents (the City Plan for example), live issues and key contacts for Members to take away. Where possible and where they may be returning Members, Committee Chairs may also wish to attend and meet new Members in a less formal setting. This would be a new element of the 2025 Induction offering and any additional direction that the Sub-Committee might have as to format and delivery would be extremely helpful at this juncture ahead of plans being progressed further.

All-Member Reception (hosted by the Chief Commoner)

17. It is proposed that an early evening, All-Member, Reception, hosted by the Chief Commoner, take place in the initial weeks of the induction programme. The 2022 reception, took place between 5.30pm and 8pm, and followed the first meeting of the Court of Common Council in April. All Members and Chief Officers were invited to attend. Again, the Sub-Committee's views on format and invitees would be welcome ahead of plans being finalised. This is provided for information. Any observations on the event will be provided to the Chief Commoner for their consideration ahead of planning for the 2025 event.

Policy Chair's Supper

18. It is proposed that the Policy Chair once again hold a supper for all newly elected Members early on in the programme to provide all with an opportunity to meet one another as well as some key Officers in a less formal setting and to pose specific queries of the Chair as to his vision and wider corporate priorities. This is provided for information. Any observations on the event will be provided to the Policy Chair for their consideration ahead of planning for the 2025 event.

New Member Induction Programme 2025
31st March 2025 - 11th April 2025 – Phase 1

19. Given that a period of two weeks in April is taken out by the proposed Easter recess period in 2025, Officers are of the view that the first three weeks following election should be focused primarily on sessions for new Members. This will commence with a choice of Initial New Member Briefing slots during the week commencing 24th March 2025.
20. It is proposed that the weeks commencing 31st March and 7th April 2025 then feature those sessions considered key to new Members. Sessions proposed for this initial period at present are:
- Member Code of Conduct – if proposed changes to the Code of Conduct are approved by Court in Autumn 2024 this will have the effect of making attendance at this training mandatory. New members will therefore need to attend prior to any Committee appointments at the April 2025 Court.
 - How the Decision-Making Process Works
 - Court of Common Council – Your First Meeting – a briefing session to be supplemented by rehearsals held alongside colleagues in Remembrancer's on Court day
 - Corporate Plan
 - The City's Finances/Financial Framework
 - Drop in IT Support sessions

It is hoped that these could be repeated across the two-week period (particularly the Code of Conduct training should this be deemed mandatory by this stage) with a mixture of morning, lunchtime and early evening slots set aside. It is proposed that all sessions be offered in a hybrid format and that all are also recorded and made available on the Members' Portal to enable Members to re-visit at their leisure.

21. Ahead of finalising sessions with relevant officers we would appreciate the Sub-Committee's views as to session content so that, on this occasion, we might provide more of a steer in this respect, striking the best possible balance between what new Members need to know around each subject to fulfil their roles to the best of their ability from the outset whilst also being cognisant of the need to not overwhelm them with information.

6th May 2025 – 25th July 2025 – Phase 2

22. Early discussions are already underway with relevant officers to consider the format of the broader Induction and Refresher Programme which will be delivered as of 6th May 2025 and through to the summer recess. As in previous years, it is proposed that a schedule of face-to-face/hybrid briefing sessions be developed in consultation with various Chief Officers but with those sessions available, for the most part, to all Members and delivered over a longer period.
23. The programme would offer a mixture of morning, lunchtime and early evening slots that will be set aside, around the formal schedule of committee meetings, to allow Chief Officers to deliver a series of briefings on relevant corporate issues

and priorities. Taking on board previous feedback as to session length, each will take the form of a 90-minute offering.

24. A series of headline briefings will also be scheduled with key officers outlining cross-cutting themes, activities and corporate priorities around culture, climate, enabling functions, scrutiny, and strategy. It would also be useful to clarify the role of institutions and the role/responsibilities of Members working with those institutions.
25. The Corporation aspires to be a leader in equality and inclusion, serving a wide range of communities including staff, residents, businesses, and the workforce of the Square Mile. An important element of the Induction Programme will therefore be to stress the Corporation's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion at every level as a public authority.
26. Training on any committee-specific issues will also be rolled out to Members as Committee memberships are established and a series of visits, if thought to be useful, will also be explored. This could include visits to the City's Schools, the Old Bailey, Mansion House and the Open Spaces for example.
27. Some more practical skills sessions will also be available during this period i.e. Chairing Skills for new Chairs.
28. The programme of events held over the quarter following election in 2022 is attached at **Appendix 2**. Members views as to which sessions they might like to see repeated or replaced are sought at this stage. It would also be helpful to have a broad steer from the Sub-Committee as to what 'headline issues' each session might helpfully cover so that this steer can be offered to those Officers presenting in advance of their sessions being developed over the coming months.

Other Induction Activities and Support to New Members

32. In addition to the formal Induction offer of briefings and visits, all newly elected Members will receive ongoing practical and pastoral support from the Governance and Member Services Team, the Remembrancer's Department, the Chief Commoner, Member buddies, Aldermen and relevant Ward Deputies.
33. A comprehensive Members' Induction Pack is also currently being compiled and will include updated guidance and clarification on a range of issues. The 2022 Member Induction Handbook was shared at your last meeting and it is proposed that the format be refreshed for 2025.
34. We are hoping that the E-Handbook (previously issued as a PDF) might be integrated through the Member Portal Page so that Members can access up-to-date information at any time. This will also ensure that there is a helpful and accurate resource available as and when by-elections are held. In the event this is not feasible, a like-for-like update will be provided. We do, however, still feel a physical hand out (perhaps highlighting the information available via the portal and how to access it) will be necessary for the induction sessions.

35. Another suggested new initiative for 2025 is the introduction of returning Members as buddies. The view of Members was that this should not be over formalised and so the intention would be for the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Chief Commoner, to contact all existing Members intending to re-stand prior to election and seek any expressions of interest to serve in this capacity. Members could be asked to submit a statement of no more than 300 words outlining their relevant qualities/expertise so that these might be considered by the Chief Commoner and Deputy Chair of MDDSC, in consultation with the Assistant Town Clerk in good time and a pool of Members appointed in this capacity with their contact details then shared within any induction material.

Future Member Development Activities

36. Proposals in respect of the longer-term Member Development offer will be submitted to the Sub-Committee for consideration before the summer recess in 2025, following a review and evaluation of the learning captured and feedback received during the Induction/Refresher Programme and once Members' on-going learning and development interests are better understood.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

37. Ensuring that we have a comprehensive, 'fit-for-purpose' Member Induction and longer-term Member Development Programme promotes high standards of corporate governance throughout the organisation and demonstrates support and democratic services which meet the needs of our elected Members and electorate.

Financial Implications

38. There is an annual budget allocation of £9k made by the City Corporation for Member Learning and Development. There has been no spend recorded against this to date for the 2024/25 financial year but there is a pending charge of £1,052.25 for the delivery of the recent Civica (Mod.Gov) training during Quarter 1, leaving a total of £7,947.74 at the time of writing.

Resource Implications

39. No further resource implications have been immediately identified following previous reporting. The vast majority of learning and development events proposed will be offered in-house, unless otherwise directed by this Sub-Committee. Where relevant, subsequent reports setting out the final Induction offering will set these out in greater detail.

Legal Implications

38. Members are asked to note the City Corporation's duty, under the Localism Act 2011, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members.

Risk Implications

39. The success of the Member Learning and Development Programme is reliant on the level of Member engagement. If the offer is not sufficiently appropriate or engaging, objectives will not be met. If successful, the delivery of the Strategy ought to help mitigate against corporate risks across the organisation, with Members being better equipped to discharge their various responsibilities. Member conduct represents a potential reputational risk to the organisation, together with a practical risk associated with a failure to attract and retain high quality Members and Officers should there be a negative working environment. It is, therefore, in the interests of the Corporation to take such steps as are required to foster a positive and inclusive working environment for its Members and Officers.

Equalities Implications

40. Public bodies have a duty under the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The proposals contained in this report do not have any potential negative impact on a particular group of people based on their protected characteristics, rather they seek to actively foster good relations between and equality of opportunity for all. Officers will ensure that the Induction/Refresher offering is accessible to all Members and would accommodate those requiring additional support to enable all delegates to have the same opportunities. Wherever possible, reasonable adjustments will be made to allow equality of access.

Climate Implications:

41. There are no climate implications arising from this report.

Security Implications:

42. There are no security implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

43. The Member-led learning and development programme remains an important aspect of the organisation's Member Services offer to each of its elected Members. We are continuing to strive to ensure that Members view the programme as their resource, tailored to their needs and to give them access to

the skills, knowledge, and expertise with which to conduct their role as a representative for those who live and work in the City.

44. In advance of the Ward elections on 20th March 2025, the priority is to develop and deliver an engaging, accessible, and useful Member Induction Programme which will be delivered as of 24th March 2025. The wider programme should also provide opportunities for returning Members to further develop, enhance and share their skills, knowledge, and experience about how the organisation works and their role as elected Members in developing and delivering corporate priorities in increasingly challenging and changing circumstances. The Sub-Committee is therefore asked to note the contents of this report and the 2025 Member Induction proposals as they currently stand. Members are invited to comment on the proposals and offer their views in respect of the proposed timetable and focus for delivery of the induction arrangements so the final programme can be approved by the end of January 2025.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – New Member Induction 2022 Flyer
- Appendix 2 – Member Development and Induction Plan Programme of Events Flyer (2022)

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