

<b>Committee(s):</b> Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee	<b>Date:</b> 07/02/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Updated Induction Schedule 2025	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author(s):</b> Isaac Thomas	

### 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 19/20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and, thereafter, up until Summer recess 2025.

A range of activities are already underway to support the wider Member Induction Programme, including a comprehensive refresh and review of the Member Portal pages such that they include all relevant documentation 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 latest update provided at your last meeting.

### Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the updated Member Induction Schedule (**Appendix 1**) for the initial few weeks and the first quarter following election. Members are invited to provide final 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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. It is no longer our intention to replicate the E-Handbook (previously issued as a PDF). We now intend for this information to be integrated through the Member Portal Pages so that Members can access up-to-date information at any time. We are currently undertaking a full review and refresh of the Member Portal pages to ensure that all key material and documentation are easily accessible for Members.
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 first Court of Common Council meeting will take place on 25 April 2025, 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. It is proposed that the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> March shall be occupied with the two New Member Induction Days, taking place on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March and Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March respectively. This leaves the w/c 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 as a primary focus ahead of April Court and any Committee appointments.

9. As discussed at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, the following timetable and activities are therefore proposed immediately after the elections on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025:

- **New Member Induction Days** – A choice of sessions on either Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March (from 9.45am), and Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March (from 9.45am).
  - **Induction Fayre Event** – Taking place from 12-2pm on both New Member Induction Days. Providing an opportunity for new Members to meet Chief Officers, learn more about departments, and garner interest for particular Committees.
  - **All-Member Reception** (hosted by the Chief Commoner) – On rising of Court, Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April.
  - **Policy Chairman's All Member Reception** – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April (6-8pm).
  - **Policy Chairman's Breakfast Briefings** – A series of five breakfast briefing sessions led by the Chairman of Policy and Resources.
  - **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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025, ahead of the Easter recess period ('Phase 1'). Thereafter, a broader series of hybrid sessions and visits delivered between 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
10. Some thoughts on each aspect of the programme set out above, are detailed in paragraphs 12 to 27 and Members' views are invited so the programme can be finalised.
11. As has been the case in previous years, we have sought 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. In light of this, we ensured that members of the Governance and Member Services Team were present at the two Candidates and Agents Briefing sessions held at Guildhall on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January and Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January. These sessions provided an opportunity for the Assistant Town Clerk to speak to prospective candidates on the role of Governance and Member Services, and to highlight important dates in the induction schedule, details of which were included in the candidate packs distributed at the event. It is our intention to send candidate packs to all candidates following the commencement of the nomination period on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025. 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.

### **New Member Induction Days and 'Induction Fayre' Event**

12. The two New Member Induction Days are scheduled to take place on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March and Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March respectively, with new Members being required to attend on only one of the two days. The Induction Days will commence with refreshments and registration from 9.45-10.15am, where the opportunity will be taken to ensure that formal paperwork such as the Members' Code of Conduct are completed. Photographs for security passes will also be

taken during the registration period, with the intention that security passes are issued in the afternoon. Registration will be followed by welcome speeches from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive (10.15-10.30am), the Chairman of Policy and Resources (10.30-10.45am) and the Chief Commoner and Chief Commoner Elect (10.45-11.00am). After a short refreshments break, the Deputy Town Clerk will provide a presentation on the role of Members. The full timetable of the Induction Days can be found at **Appendix 2**.

13. Based on feedback from the Sub-Committee, an 'Induction Fayre' event will be held in the Livery Hall on both Induction Days from 12-2pm. The aim of the 'Induction Fayre' is to provide an opportunity for new Members to learn more about the departments, meet Chief Officers and other relevant officers within departments and garner interest for relevant committees in advance of the annual appointment of Committees that will take place during their first Court of Common Council meeting on Friday 25 April 2025. We have liaised with all major departments about hosting 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. A buffet will be provided. Officers from the Governance and Member Services Team will also be in circulation at this event to help signpost different areas of interest and respond to general enquiries.
14. At the close of the 'Induction Fayre,' several practical issues will also helpfully be addressed, 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.
15. It is proposed that the cost of any food and refreshment for these sessions will be met from the Member Development budget.
16. Officers from the Governance and Member Services Team will support delivery of the Induction Days.

### **Policy Chairman's All Member Reception**

17. The Policy Chairman has proposed to hold a supper for all newly elected Members on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 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. Any observations on the event will be provided to the Policy Chair for their consideration ahead of planning for the 2025 event.

### **All-Member Reception (hosted by the Chief Commoner)**

18. An early evening, All-Member Reception, hosted by the Chief Commoner, is due to follow the first meeting of the Court of Common Council on Friday 25th April. All Members and Chief Officers are invited to attend. The Sub-Committee's views on format and invitees would be welcome ahead of plans being finalised. Any observations on the event will be provided to the Chief Commoner 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 New Member Induction Day slots during the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
20. It is proposed that the weeks commencing 31<sup>st</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 then feature those sessions considered key to new Members. Sessions proposed for this initial period at present are:
- Member Code of Conduct – Attendance at this training will be mandatory should the new Code of Conduct be approved next month. New (and indeed returning) members will therefore need to attend prior to any Committee appointments at the April 2025 Court. For this reason, the training will be repeated on 4 separate occasions ahead of April Court.
  - Charity Obligations
  - Police Authority Obligations
  - First City Corporation Ceremonial Event / The City's Relations with Parliament and Royal Household
  - City of London Corporation Financial Framework
  - Corporate Health and Safety / Corporate Risk Management
  - How the Decision Making Process Works
  - Accessing your committee papers (Mod.gov)
  - Corporate Parenting
  - IT and How to Make the Most of IT as a Councillor / GDPR Obligations

We have proposed to officers 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, unless otherwise specified.

21. It is our intention to provide session presenters with an 'aide memoire,' detailing useful guidelines for session content and presentation, based on past feedback that we have received from Members. These guidelines will underscore our expectations on areas such as a session's accessibility, the incorporation of EEDI implications and advice around taking questions at the end of sessions. 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.

## **6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – Phase 2**

22. The broader Induction and Refresher Programme will be delivered as of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and through to the summer recess. As in previous years, this will involve a schedule of face-to-face/hybrid briefing sessions, developed in consultation with various Chief Officers. These sessions are available to all Members and delivered over a longer period.
23. The programme offers a mixture of morning, lunchtime and early evening slots that are 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Some more practical skills sessions will also be available during this period i.e. Chairing Skills for new Chairs.
27. The programme of events held over the quarter following election in 2025 is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## **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. We also intend to issue hard copy forms where possible on Induction Days to encourage and expedite their completion.

35. Another new initiative for 2025 is the introduction of returning Members as buddies. In light of Members' views that this should not be over formalised, the Town Clerk has, on behalf of the Chief Commoner, contacted all existing Members intending to re-stand, seeking any expressions of interest to serve in this capacity. Those interested were requested to submit a statement of no more than 300 words outlining their relevant qualities/expertise. A full update on the Member Buddying Scheme has been provided separately.

### **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 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the priority is to develop and deliver an engaging, accessible, and useful Member Induction Programme which will be delivered as of 24<sup>th</sup> 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 February 2025.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Member Development and Induction Schedule 2025
- Appendix 2 – New Member Induction Day 2025 Flyer

### **Isaac Thomas**

Personal Assistant and Member Services Officer

E: [isaac.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:isaac.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk)