

Committee(s): Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee	Date: 08/07/2025
Subject: Member Induction Review	Public report: For Decision
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?	No
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
Report author:	Isaac Thomas, Town Clerk's Department

Summary

This report provides a review of the Member Induction and Refresher Programme that was delivered for new and returning Members immediately following the Ward elections on 19/20th March 2025 and which will continue to be delivered up until Summer recess, 2025.

A range of activities were provided to support the wider Member Induction Programme for new and returning Members, including:

- Two New Member Induction Days.
- A series of hybrid briefings on key issues, open to both new and returning Members.
- Member's Portal: Following a comprehensive refresh and review, the new Member's Portal was launched as the landing page on all Members City of London Corporation devices.
- New Member Buddying Scheme: A new addition to the Member induction, whereby a pool of returning Members volunteered to offer support and advice to newly elected Members on an informal basis.

The Town Clerk was pleased to receive positive feedback on the Member Induction as a whole. Feedback from both new and returning Members indicated that the induction programme was an overall success and served to provide a comprehensive and effective introduction to the wide-ranging responsibilities and intricacies of the City of London Corporation. Members are now invited to reflect on what went well during the induction, as well as any areas that could be changed or improved on in future Member inductions.

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to provide feedback on the induction arrangements provided to all Common Councillors in the initial few weeks and first quarter following the Ward elections on 20th March 2025. Members are invited to provide suggestions on how future inductions can be improved, in terms of the focus and timing of events, any gaps in the initial training, as well as any improvements that could be made to the Member's Portal. Members are also invited to consider whether improvements could be made to the Member Buddying Scheme and/or whether the scheme should be repeated for future intakes.

Main Report

Background – Induction Arrangements

1. The City Corporation's 'all out' Ward elections (in contested wards) took place on 20th March 2025. It was agreed that a comprehensive Induction and Refresher programme would be offered to all Common Councillors in the quarter after this date (running from April – June 2025), under the direction of the Member Development & Standards Sub-Committee.
2. The induction arrangements were considered by the Sub-Committee at several meetings in the build-up to the Ward elections. At meetings on 8th March 2024, 17th July 2024 and 24th October 2024, Members offered their views in respect of the proposed timetable and focus for delivery of the initial induction and the following Induction/Refresher programme arrangements.
3. At its meeting on 7th February 2025, which would be the final meeting before the Ward elections on 20th March, the Sub-Committee was presented with a final report that set out the induction proposals in more detail, including a finalised induction schedule and a flyer that detailed the proposed timings for the two new member induction days. Members offered their final comments and expressed their approval of the induction arrangements that had been made.
4. Due to the positive feedback received by the Town Clerk and the level of Member engagement in the programme after the Ward elections in March 2022, by both new and returning Members, it was intended that the 2025 induction programme would follow a similar format and consider the areas of activity that Members found most useful.
5. Following the positive feedback from the 2022 induction, the Member Induction programme for 2025 offered Members an appropriate mixture of hybrid briefings that were intended to be helpful and informative to both new and returning Members, with some earlier activities being tailored to the needs of newly elected Members, such as the two New Member Induction Days.
6. In looking at the timetable for delivery of the 2025 Member Induction Programme, the calendar of meetings was carefully reviewed. It was noted that the first Court of Common Council meeting would take place on 25 April 2025, and that a fair portion of April 2025 was taken out by the Easter recess period.

7. 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 was therefore agreed that the week commencing 24th March would be occupied with the two New Member Induction Days, which took place on Monday 24th March and Wednesday 26th March, respectively. This left the w/c 31st March 2025 and 7th April 2025 as a primary focus ahead of April Court and any Committee appointments.
8. The following timetable was delivered immediately after the elections on 20th March 2025:
 - **New Member Induction Days** – A choice of sessions on either Monday 24th March (from 9.45am), and Wednesday 26th March (from 9.45am).
 - **Induction Fair Event** – Taking place from 12-2pm on both New Member Induction Days. This event provided an opportunity for new Members to meet Chief Officers, learn more about the departments, and garner interest for particular Committees ahead of the formal Committee appointment process.
 - **All-Member Reception** (hosted by the Chief Commoner) – This was held on the rising of Court, Friday 25th April.
 - **Policy Chairman's All Member Reception** – Wednesday 2nd 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) were 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 were delivered between 28th April 2025 and 25th July 2025.
9. As was the case in previous years, candidates were provided with details of the induction arrangements prior to the election so that the events could be diarised by all in good time and thereby ensure maximum engagement. The Assistant Town Clerk took the opportunity to speak to prospective candidates at two Candidates and Agents Briefing sessions that were held at Guildhall on Thursday 9th January and Thursday 16th January. At these events, the Assistant Town Clerk introduced the role of Governance and Member Services and asked prospective candidates to take note of several important dates in the induction schedule, details of which were included in the candidate packs distributed at the events.
10. This information was then re-circulated to all candidates following the commencement of the nomination period on 17th February 2025. Candidates were once again encouraged to take note of key dates included within the Member Induction Programme so that they could benefit from as many of the planned activities as possible, if elected.

New Member Induction Days and 'Induction Fair' Event

11. Two New Member Induction Days were held at Guildhall on Monday 24th March and Wednesday 26th March respectively, with new Members being required to

attend on only one of the two days. Across the two induction days, 21 out of the 28 newly elected Members were welcomed to the City Corporation.

12. The Induction Days commenced with refreshments and registration from 9.45-10.15am. New Members were advised to arrive at the West Wing reception during this timeslot, where they were met by officers of the Governance & Member Services team and led to the Committee Rooms on the second floor. A Chairman's Room was also allocated for new Members to have their photographs taken for their security passes. Security passes were then promptly issued ahead of the induction fair in the afternoon.
13. Registration was 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 provided a presentation on the role of Members.
14. Based on the feedback and suggestions of the Sub-Committee, an 'Induction Fair' event was held in the Livery Hall on both Induction Days from 12-2pm. The aim of the 'Induction Fair' was 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 would take place at the first Court of Common Council meeting on Friday 25th April 2025.
15. We 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. We were pleased that a total of 17 stalls were hosted by Chief and Senior Officers on each day, enabling new Members to meet and greet key officers from across the Corporation. A buffet was also provided, and several officers from the Governance and Member Services Team attended the events to help signpost different areas of interest and respond to general enquiries.
16. The opportunity was also taken to invite all available 'Member Buddies' to the Induction events for face-to-face introductions with New Members.
17. Both induction fairs received positive feedback, with suggestions that this style of event should be hosted on future occasions. It was also suggested that these events should be replicated as part of the induction for future intakes.
18. Useful feedback was provided at the Induction Fair on Monday 24th March as several Member Buddies and officers indicated that, due to the large number of Members and officers attending the event, it was difficult to pinpoint who was a New Member. This feedback enabled the Member Services & Governance Team to provide name badges to New Members at the event on Wednesday 26th March, making the second cohort of New Members more easily identifiable.
19. At the close of the 'Induction Fair,' several practical issues were also helpfully addressed. New Members were provided with a tour of the Guildhall complex,

specifically the Members' areas; new Members were able to make their IT preferences; pigeon-holes were allocated and new Members were assisted with robe fittings.

20. New Members were also advised of several documents that would need to be completed, each with associated deadlines. Hard copy forms were provided on both induction days to encourage and expedite their completion. The issuing of hard copy forms was followed by an email to all New Members that provided electronic copies of all documentation that required their completion, along with the associated deadlines.
21. Following the delivery of the two induction days, the Governance & Member Services team reached out to those 7 New Members that were unable to attend either of the induction days, offering the opportunity to run through the various tasks and requests that they had missed at a convenient time (e.g., tour of Guildhall, robe fitting, security pass issuing, business card request and IT offering). This was then accommodated on an individual basis at a convenient time for each Member.

Policy Chairman hosted breakfast briefings

22. The Policy Charman held a series of five breakfast briefings, tailored for newly elected Members, which provided an overview of some of the priorities of the Policy and Resources Committee and the City of London Corporation. The Breakfast Briefings received positive feedback from New Members.

Policy Chairman's All Member Reception

23. The Policy Chairman held a supper for all newly elected Members on Wednesday 2nd April, which provided 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.

All-Member Reception (hosted by the Chief Commoner)

24. Following the first meeting of the Court of Common Council on Friday 25th April, the Chief Commoner hosted an early evening All-Member Reception. All Members and Chief Officers were invited to attend on the rise of Court. The reception received positive feedback from both new and returning Members.

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

25. Following the two New Member Induction Day slots during the week commencing 24th March 2025, a series of hybrid briefing sessions were provided to all new and returning Members. Member Briefings were split in two phases, with Phase 1 being more deliberately tailored to new Members. The first phase was delivered between 31st March 2025 and 11th April 2025, ahead of the Easter Recess.
26. The following sessions took place during this initial period:

- Members' Code of Conduct
- 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

27. Session presenters were provided with an 'aide memoire' which detailed useful guidelines for session content and presentation, based on past feedback that we have received from Members. These guidelines underscored 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. This was intended to strike the best possible balance between what new Members needed 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.

28th April 2025 – 25th July 2025 – Phase 2

28. The broader Induction and Refresher Programme was delivered as of 28th April 2025 and will run through to the summer recess.

29. The programme offers a mixture of morning, lunchtime and early evening slots that are set aside, around the formal schedule of committee meetings, enabling Chief Officers to deliver a series of briefings on relevant corporate issues and priorities.

30. 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. It was therefore important to stress the Corporation's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion at every level as a public authority.

31. Training on committee-specific issues, including site visits, was also rolled out to Members as Committee memberships were established.

32. The following programme of events was scheduled for the period 28th April – 25th July, with additional briefings being added to the programme at the request of Members and officers:

- Member Safety
- Corporate Strategies
- City Bridge Foundation
- City Belonging
- Wardmotes
- Procurement Awareness
- Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and Common Hall (to be rescheduled)

- The Livery (to be rescheduled)
- People Strategy
- Suicide Prevention (new addition)
- Project Governance
- City Surveyors (new addition)
- Port Health & Environmental Services (new addition)
- Digital and Social Media

Members' Portal

33. In addition to the formal Induction offer of briefings, a comprehensive refresh and review of the Member Portal pages was undertaken to ensure that all relevant documentation was included.
34. A new Member's Portal was launched in the week following the election, with the link being provided to all new and returning Members. The Member's Portal was subsequently installed as the landing page on all Members City Corporation devices.
35. The Member's Portal provides Members with access to key documents, contacts and information that should help support you in your role as a Common Councillor or Alderman. The Sub-Committee's feedback on the Portal pages, including any suggestions of improvements or additions, would be gratefully received.
36. 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.

Member Buddying Scheme

37. A new addition to the Member Induction, a Member-on-Member Buddying Scheme was introduced to offer new Members contact with a pool of returning Members, or 'Member Buddies', who volunteered their time to help with signposting and providing advice on issues affecting the life of a Member, given their unique position of being able to provide a first-hand account of this. Throughout the induction, Buddies were available to offer support and advice on a more informal basis, especially during the first year of a new councillor's term of office, to help ease them into their new roles.
38. The buddying scheme was not intended to replace the direct contact and access all Members can expect when they wish to speak to the Chief Executive, Directors of Services, members of the Governance and Member Services Team or indeed their own Ward Alderman, Deputies and colleagues. Conversely, it was hoped that this new system will complement these more formal and well-established structures already in place.

39. On 7th February 2025, the Sub-Committee noted the outcome of the selection process for identifying Member buddies and approved the introduction of a Member/Member buddying scheme as part of the 2025 Induction Plan.
40. In light of the Sub-Committee's approval of the Buddying Scheme, the full list of Members Buddies (which numbered 15 Members in total) and their supporting statements, was added to the Member's Portal. As mentioned previously, all Member Buddies were invited to the lunchtime Induction Fair events on 24th and 26th March, as an opportunity for face-to-face introductions with new Members.
41. Feedback has since been sought on the Member Buddying Scheme to ascertain whether it should be repeated in future inductions and/or whether any improvements could be made for future intakes. The feedback from Member Buddies has been mixed and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Future Member Development Activities

42. Proposals in respect of the longer-term Member Development are being submitted to the Sub-Committee for consideration in a separate report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

43. 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

44. There is an annual budget allocation of £9k made by the City Corporation for Member Learning and Development.

Resource Implications

45. 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

46. 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

47. 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

48. 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:

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

Security Implications:

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

Conclusion

51. 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.
52. The Town Clerk was pleased to receive positive feedback on the 2025 Member Induction as a whole. Feedback from both new and returning Members indicated that the induction programme was an overall success and served to provide a comprehensive and effective introduction to the wide-ranging responsibilities and intricacies of the City of London Corporation. Members are now invited to reflect on what went well during the induction, as well as any areas that could be changed or improved on in future Member inductions.

53. The Sub-Committee is asked to provide feedback on the induction arrangements provided to all Common Councillors in the initial few weeks and first quarter following the Ward elections on 20th March 2025. Members are invited to provide suggestions on how future inductions can be improved, in terms of the focus and timing of events, any gaps in the initial training, as well as any improvements that could be made to the Member's Portal. Members are also invited to consider whether improvements could be made to the Member Buddying Scheme and/or whether the scheme should be repeated for future intakes.

Isaac Thomas

Personal Assistant and Member Services Officer

E: isaac.thomas@cityoflondon.gov.uk