

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES**

**COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2025 TO  
2029**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report asks the Committee to approve the indicative Councillor Induction and Development Plan (**Appendix A**) for implementation, following the election on 1 May 2025.

**Information**

2. At its meeting on 16 October 2024, the Governance and Ethics Committee agreed to establish a working group to look at Member training and development. The Councillor Induction and Development Programme Working Group was tasked with this work; its terms of reference included the following aspects of Member training:
  - To develop an initial internal programme of training and development fundamentals.
  - To roll out a comprehensive Member induction programme of mandatory training for implementation after the May 2025 County Council elections.
  - To offer a range of training and development tools and techniques as part of this comprehensive programme.
  - To establish a rolling programme of events, workshops, guidance, toolkits, online, interactive and face-to-face training and development opportunities to meet Members' needs within available budgets
3. When the working group met on 27 November 2024, it considered an initial draft of the Councillor Induction and Development Programme. It was proposed that, where possible, training sessions would be developed and provided in-house. **Table 1** sets out the feedback provided by the working group and how this influenced the draft plan.

Table 1

**a Governance Arrangements**

The working group acknowledged that since the last election in 2021, the Council had moved from a Committee System to a Leader and Cabinet model of governance. The working group recommended that a session on governance arrangements should be included in the programme, along with a separate session on scrutiny arrangements.

- b Mental Health Capacity Act training**

The working group felt that it would be helpful for Councillors to receive training on how they could better engage with residents who faced challenges with their mental health. A session on the Mental Health Capacity Act was therefore included in the programme.
- c Blue Badges**

Members of the working group requested that the Introduction to Customer Services training session was expanded to include information on Blue Badge applications and renewals. This will be built into the content of this session.
- d Handling the media and media interviews**

Members of the working group suggested that these sessions should be mandatory for all Councillors and not limited just to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs/Vice-chairs. Rather than removing one-to-one training sessions for Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs/Vice-chairs, it was agreed that three separate sessions would be held to provide all Councillors with fundamental skills for interacting with the media.
- e Refresher training**

For complex and regulatory matters, the working group requested that refresher training should be included in the plan. This has been reflected within the plan, recognising the balance between ensuring Councillors have the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to carry out their roles and avoiding unnecessary repetition.
- f Mixed delivery methods**

Members agreed that a mix of mediums should be used. They also recognised the impact that training had on Members' time, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the election. This was taken into account when identifying proposed training methods. Some sessions will be delivered as virtual or hybrid meetings while others will take place in-person. Other sessions will be available through an online platform so that Members can complete them at a time that suits them. Knowledge Boosters include workbooks produced by the Local Government Association, which provides another learning format that Members can access at any time.
- g Monitoring of training**

There was strong feeling amongst Members that training needed to be monitored to ensure that mandatory training was completed. This was noted and can be achieved through the 'My Learning' portal. Councillors would have an opportunity to register that they intended to attend a training session. Officers running these training sessions would then be able to confirm which Councillors had attended, and this training would appear on their training record.
- h Pension Fund Committee and Local Pensions Board**

The working group agreed that an understanding of the regulatory and procedural arrangements for the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund Committee and the Local Pensions Board should be a priority for new Members. It was felt that training should be mandatory for all Members of the Pension Fund Committee and Local Pensions Board and for substitutes. In view of proposed reforms in respect of Local Government Pension Schemes, the working party agreed that it would be beneficial for all new Councillors to attend this training.

- i Councillor Divisional Fund (CDF) Training  
A request was made for a mandatory session for new Councillors on how Councillor Divisional Funds could be spent and the process for submitting CDF requests. Returning Councillors would also be welcome to attend this session.
  - j The Role of Groups  
There was recognition that the political groups play a role in Member development. This will be co-ordinated directly by each group. Groups would take responsibility for ensuring that Members attended training sessions which were identified as mandatory.
4. The updated draft induction programme was presented to the working group meeting on 14 January 2025. The comments raised are addressed in **Table 2**.

Table 2

- a East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and Local Government Reorganisation  
The working group felt that local government reorganisation and EMCCA were difficult concepts for existing Councillors to understand and that all Councillors, especially new Councillors, would benefit from a training session on these topics.
  - b Committee-specific training for substitutes and other Members  
Members of the working group were keen that any committee-specific training should be made available to substitute members as well as the wider Council membership. Where it was mandatory for a Councillor to have completed training before sitting on a Committee, the training would also be mandatory for substitute Members. As capacity permitted, this training would also be open for all Members of the Council to attend.
  - c Social Media  
The working group reported that it could be difficult at times for Members to engage with residents online. It was requested that a training session be held to explore the value of social media and how it could be best utilised by Councillors, including managing criticism and engaging with residents. This was added to the programme.
  - d Personal Safety  
The working group requested a training session on personal security. This session would cover Members' safety when attending events, canvassing and surgeries. It would also cover how Members could safely visit the community after incidents such as flooding and the risks associated with this. A session on personal safety was included in the programme.
  - e Information Security / Information Governance  
It was reported that an Information Security / Information Governance E-learning module had been developed by the Data Protection Team. This training had been rolled out successfully through E-learning in 2021, and it was agreed that this would remain as an E-learning session in the 2025-29 programme.
5. The draft programme was then shared with officers to refine the detail. Further suggestions were made, which were reported to the Members' Communication and Engagement Working Group on Wednesday 5 February 2025.

6. At this meeting, the working group recommended the draft programme to the Governance and Ethics Committee for approval. Councillors articulated their support for the draft programme and indicated that they were comfortable with the sessions that were proposed and the indicative phasing. At this meeting, Members were advised that a matrix would also be developed to assist Councillors in mapping out their training journey. The matrix would set out various Councillor roles and the required training for each, including whether it is mandatory, recommended or optional.
7. The draft programme, which is attached at **Appendix A** to this report, sets out indicative dates; upon approval from the Committee to implement the draft programme, dates will be programmed and content developed.

### **Other Options Considered**

8. The Council could choose to outsource all training; however, this option would carry significant cost, particularly noting that, for most sessions, appropriate expertise and knowledge is available in-house.
9. Rather than adopt a comprehensive induction and training programme, the Council could choose simply to run *ad hoc* training. This option would make it more difficult for Members to plan and would introduce a risk of insufficiently equipping Councillors with the skills they need to carry out their roles. Certainly an element of flexibility within any approach to training will be required to reflect emerging knowledge needs of Councillors working within a changing local and national environment. Adopting a comprehensive plan, however, provides a framework into which additional sessions and resources can be incorporated to flexibly and effectively structure Members' learning and development.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

10. The election scheduled for 1 May 2025 will bring a new cohort of Councillors, a proportion of whom will be new to the Council. Adopting a training programme will provide a flexible framework to equip all elected Members to effectively carry out their roles as community leaders and participants in Council decision-making.
11. The Councillor Induction and Development Programme 2025 to 2029 is a living document and will need to reflect the changing landscape locally and nationally. It may therefore be necessary to add further training modules, to ensure Members have the requisite skills and knowledge to support them in their roles.
12. Learning and development for Councillors is vital in order to deliver strong governance in Nottinghamshire. A comprehensive understanding their public sector equality duty will ensure that Councillors demonstrate sound judgement when making decisions or introducing new policies.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty,

safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Governance and Ethics Committee:

- 1) Approves the indicative Councillor Induction and Development Programme 2025 to 2029 for implementation
- 2) Approves the designation of training sessions as optional, recommended or mandatory, as set out in the Councillor Induction and Development Programme 2025 to 2029.
- 3) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make subsequent alterations to the plan if considered necessary to ensure the delivery of good governance.

**Marjorie Toward, Service Director  
Customers, Governance and Employees**

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### **Constitutional Comments (EKH 24/02/2025)**

14. The recommendations within the report fall within the remit of Governance and Ethics Committee

### **Financial Comments (PAA29 24/02/2025)**

15. Any costs incurred in the delivery of the Councillor Induction and Development Plan will be met from the Members training budget which for 2025/26, as in 2024/25, will be £8,000.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Governance and Ethics Committee, 16 October 2024 – [Committee Report](#)
- Governance and Ethics Committee, 16 October 2024 – [Minutes](#)

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All