

Council

23 February 2023



Title	Member Induction Programme 2023
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Matthew Williams, Committee Manager
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Service delivery
Recommendations	<p>Council is asked to approve the recommendation from the Standards Committee to:</p> <p>Approve the proposed Member's Induction Programme for 2023.</p> <p>Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to make changes to the Programme to reflect any necessary amendments.</p> <p>Authorise the Monitoring Officer to amend the Members' Code of Conduct in accordance with Appendix C.</p>
Reason for Recommendation	Following the elections in May 2023 it will be necessary to provide an Induction to new and re-elected councillors.

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 This report seeks to outline a proposed Induction Programme aimed at providing new Members with a comprehensive training schedule while also remaining relevant to any re-elected members. This matter was considered by the Standards Committee on 16th February 2023.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Draft Induction Programme 2023 has been put together based on the induction training offered in 2019, the feedback from that training, and suggestions from members. The training has also been reviewed to ensure that it addresses recommendations from the Corporate Peer Review.

- 2.2 As with 2019, the preferred format for the Induction was to have it delivered by officers and external professional trainers, to include input from experienced members where appropriate.
- 2.3 The Induction Programme aims to deliver the essential training for new members and refresher training for any re-elected members.
- 2.4 Further development workshops and seminars can be arranged following completion of the Induction Programme but that is beyond the scope of this report.
- 2.5 Additional resources have been sourced through the Local Government Association (LGA) including workbooks and e-learning.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 Option 1: Approve the proposed Induction Programme and expenditure not exceeding £20,000 for external training providers. Early approval of the programme would mean it could be distributed to all candidates ahead of the election to ensure they are aware of the training commitment.

Option 2: Do nothing. This is not recommended as it will lead to there being no plan for providing training to new members.

Option 3: Create an alternative Induction Programme.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 A budget of £20,000 has been set aside for delivery of the Induction Programme and ongoing member development.
- 4.2 The anticipated cost is outlined below and does provide room for additional training beyond the core Induction Programme.
- 4.3 External Trainers, based on the 2019 programme and with input from relevant departments, have been approached to secure quotes (Appendix B).
- 4.4 The LGA have advised they feel given Spelthorne's unique political make-up it would be beneficial to have two member peers, from different political parties, presenting the training.
- 4.5 A request from current members to include a session on determining the strategic direction of the Council has been added to the draft programme and a suitable trainer is currently being sourced.

5. Risk considerations

- 5.1 Consulted with Punita Talwar on 29/11/2022.
- 5.2 If members do not attend/join training sessions this may lead to reduced insight of the Council's operations, as well as a lack of comprehensive understanding of member roles, responsibilities and expected standards of conduct, possibly resulting in sub-optimal decisions that reduce value to the local taxpayer and communities served in delivering corporate priorities.
- 5.3 To mitigate the risk identified in 5.2 we would aim to make the training sessions as accessible as possible, including exploring the option of being able to join remotely. Sessions held in the Council Chamber could also be recorded. Early publication of the dates of the mandatory sessions would ensure members are aware of the dates and times they are expected to attend and should aid with forward planning.

- 5.4 Failure to follow up on non-attendance to training sessions, the risk identified in paragraph 5.2 may prevail. To mitigate this, attendance at all training sessions will be monitored and be made publicly available via the Spelthorne Council Website. Non-attendance at mandatory sessions will be followed up with the individual member(s) and where necessary appropriate action taken. It is proposed that the Member's Code of Conduct is amended in accordance with Appendix C to ensure that members do not participate in any committee meetings until the relevant mandatory training has been completed.
- 5.5 Should the training not be adequately delivered, conveyed or understood, then the risk identified in paragraph 5.2 may prevail. To mitigate this, feedback on all training sessions will be requested and monitored on a regular basis. Where members identify that training was insufficient, further session(s) can be arranged.
- 6. Procurement considerations**
- 6.1 Procurement authorised Committee Services to get quotes for external trainers and refreshments.
- 7. Legal considerations**
- 7.1 Report sent to Legal on 29/11/22
- 8. Other considerations**
- 8.1 There are none.
- 9. Equality and Diversity**
- 9.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity training would be offered as part of the training sessions to allow members to consider these factors in their roles and decision-making.
- 9.2 Accommodations would be made for members to ensure they are able to participate fully in the training sessions.
- 10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**
- 10.1 By offering training sessions as a hybrid option, we can reduce the need for Members and Trainers to travel to the Council offices.
- 11. Timetable for implementation**
- 11.1 MAT 13 December 2022.
- 11.2 Standards Committee 16 February 2023.
- 11.3 Council 23 February 2023.
- 11.4 The Induction Programme would then be implemented immediately following the Elections on 4 May 2023.
- 12. Contact**
- 12.1 Committee Services committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Induction Programme 2023

Appendix B (Exempt): List of Training Providers and Quotes

Appendix C – Amendments to Member’s Code of Conduct