

For publication

Member Induction 2023

Meeting:	Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee
Date:	24 November, 2022
Cabinet portfolio:	Governance
Directorate:	Corporate

1.0 Reason for inclusion on the work programme

- 1.1 This topic was selected at the Overview and Scrutiny work programming sessions for 2022/23. The purpose of the review was to provide wider member input into the development of the induction programme for the borough elections in 2023.
- 1.2 Key areas that scrutiny identified to review included:
- Identifying essential training
 - Exploring different learning options
 - Developing the skills needed for different committees
 - Incorporating the development of soft/broader skills

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 Member development at Chesterfield is coordinated by the democratic services team under strategic direction from the Member Development Working Group (MDWG).
- 2.2 The MDWG is a cross-party group of members and officers who provide strategic oversight of the council's member development arrangements, monitor progress on the rolling member development programme and oversee the development of the member induction plan. The scrutiny chairs are members of the working group which provides an opportunity to feed into the rolling programme any development needs identified in scrutiny.
- 2.3 Member development at Chesterfield is delivered in a number of ways:
- i. a yearly programme of events is planned by the MDWG which all members are invited to attend;
 - ii. members can access courses on the council's online learning platform "aspire learning", and

- iii. individual members can request to attend external courses by completing an application form.

A small budget exists to fund external providers to deliver training where necessary.

- 2.4 The member development policy, first approved in 2018 and reviewed in 2021, sets out the principles of member development at Chesterfield:
- i. There will be a range of learning and development opportunities available to all members irrespective of their political group or independent status
 - ii. That member development supports and enhances
 - iii. That there is a consistency of approach to member development
 - iv. That a culture of learning is encouraged that regards continuous member development as vital to the Council's success
 - v. That learning and development will support the aims of the Council Plan and underpin our values
 - vi. Members have ownership of the development programme via the Member Development Working Group

3.0 Developing the member induction programme for 2023

- 3.1 In previous years, the member induction programme has followed a similar format which prioritises essential training, such as safeguarding and data protection, and committee specific training, to enable decision making to continue as soon as possible following the election. A yearlong development programme is then rolled out ensuring that members receive briefings on each directorate area and training on the key skills required for carrying out their roles and responsibilities by the end of the first year of their term.
- 3.2 The development of the member induction programme began in early 2022 when the MDWG reviewed and provided feedback on the programme from 2019. Initial proposals from the group included incorporating more guidance on using aspire and aspire learning and additional training on using ICT. The group were then tasked with seeking feedback from their political groups to report back to the next MDWG meeting.
- 3.3 Comprehensive feedback was received from political groups in September and discussed by the MDWG, this included:
- i. Positive comments received on the member induction booklet.
 - ii. The need for additional ICT training on ipads/laptops/printers and using programs e.g. ModGov, Word, Outlook, the internet and aspire.
 - iii. Having a "who's who" to assist with casework and information on how to report and follow up complaints/queries.

- iv. Exploring different formats for training such as online courses or recording live sessions to allow Members to watch them when they can.
- v. Additional training sessions on:
 - Climate change
 - Council meeting procedures
 - Personal safety

3.4 A draft induction plan was put together which incorporated the outcomes from the MDWG meeting. This plan was discussed again by the group at their meeting in October where it was received positively and the following amendments were proposed:

- i. Climate change session should follow the carbon literacy “Fresk” training model and include an overview of the council’s climate strategy. This training should be held earlier in the induction programme.
- ii. Finance briefing should be held earlier in the programme and the possibility of breaking this down into sections to aid members’ understanding be explored. There was an option for some external accountancy training to be delivered that the HR learning and development team were looking into.
- iii. Personal safety training should be held earlier in the programme.

3.5 The provision of online courses has been explored with the HR learning and development team. A dedicated members dashboard will be developed on the council’s online learning platform, aspire learning. This will appear as an extra button on a members’ homepage when they log onto aspire learning and will contain links to different courses that are available online. The courses will include some essential training such as equality and diversity, safeguarding and data protection. There will also be additional courses that members may wish to complete for individual development needs such as effective writing, questioning techniques and presentation skills. All these courses can be completed in members’ own time and can be saved and returned to later. The MDWG fed back that there had been issues logging onto aspire learning; this would be looked into as part of the development of the members dashboard on aspire learning.

3.6 The proposed member induction programme is attached at appendix 1 of the report along with a calendar (appendix 2) showing the timetable of the meetings and induction sessions during May and June 2023.

4.0 Potential barriers

4.1 The member induction programme is intensive as many of the training sessions must be completed in a short space of time in order for members to take up positions on committees. In previous years, this has posed a challenge for members’ being able to attend development sessions, particularly those who work or have caring responsibilities. For next year’s

programme, there is the option of using hybrid technology which will allow some sessions to be recorded and watched at a more convenient time, and the ability for some courses to be delivered in an online format. It is hoped this will make the induction sessions more accessible and increase attendance.

5.0 Future plans and areas for further scrutiny involvement

- 5.1 Scrutiny may wish to consider how to encourage and ensure as many members attend the induction sessions as possible and ways in which the induction programme can be made more accessible.
- 5.2 Scrutiny also may want to consider whether there are any further training needs that should be incorporated as part of the induction programme to ensure members are equipped for their roles on committees and wider responsibilities.

Document information

Report author	
<i>Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer, Corporate – Democratic and Elections</i>	
Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
None	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Draft Member Induction Programme 2023
Appendix 2	Committee meeting and induction calendar May-June 2023