



Governance & Audit Committee – 7 September 2016

Councillor Induction Training Attendance

Purpose of report

To provide Members with information on attendance at the 2015 Councillor Induction Training events as requested at a previous meeting

1.0 Background

1.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 18 April, councillors requested information on attendance at the 2015 Councillor Induction Training events.

2.0 2015 Councillor Induction Training

2.1 Member Induction in 2015 was split into three target areas:

- a) Information and training aimed at new councillors
- b) Training for Councillors on key specialist committees
- c) Training for all councillors

2.2 New Councillors. Immediately they were elected, Councillors were given a welcome pack which, along with their acceptance of office forms etc., gave information which it was anticipated they would need to know quickly. This pack included a Councillor Filofax with meeting dates and key statistics/contacts about the District. There were 10 new councillors in 2015.

2.3 Between the Election and Annual Council four sessions of general interest to councillors were organised as below. These sessions were targeted at new councillors but open to all councillors.

- Speed Networking Event (14/5/15) – a chance to meet the key staff/ teams at ENC and understand more about the services the council delivers. This was attended by all 10 new councillors and 14 others. This was paired with a personalised ICT Induction aimed at new councillors.
- Tour of the South of the District (16/5/15) followed on 6/6/15 with a tour of the North of the District (i.e. above the A14.) as it was recognised that not all councillors would be aware of the extent of the district and it provided an opportunity to talk about key developments. These tours were held on Saturdays as they lasted for over 3 hours. The South Tour was attended by 6 new councillors (12 in total) and the North Tour by 8 (15 in total).
- Corporate Overview - this was a short introduction to how the council works, including the corporate plan and a chance to meet with senior officers.

2.4 Three further sessions for new councillors were held after the Annual Meeting. These were:

- An introduction to the regulatory roles of the council, including Planning Management and Licensing, held on 1st June 2015, which was attended by 6 new councillors (and 10 in total).
- An introduction to local government finance and procurement held on 4th June

2015 which was attended by 6 new councillors (and 10 in total)

- Community Perspectives - exploring councillor's roles as community leaders– including use of Member Empowerment and Community Facilities Fund and their role within the council complaints policy. This was held on 25th June 2015 and attended by 7 new councillors (12 in total).

New councillors attended an average of 6 of these events (including the session for all councillors below).

2.5 All Councillors A session providing an introduction to Standards, Constitution and Legislation and the rules governing being a councillor. This was considered by the Monitoring Officer to be important for all councillors to attend, so two sessions were arranged on 14th May 2015 and 29th June 2015. Together these were attended by 8 to 10 new councillors and 12 returning councillors. Individual sessions were then organised for all the other councillors to ensure complete coverage, including signing to abide by the Council's constitution.

2.6 Regulatory and other Committees. Specialist training was held for the members of the following committees:

Committee	Date	No. of Councillors attending	Number of ENC Councillors on Committee
Planning Management	3/6/15	15	18
Scrutiny	17/6/15	8	11
Liquor Licensing	18/6/15	9	3, on a panel drawn from Licencing Committee membership of 12
Taxi Licensing	2/7/15	8	
Governance and Audit	15/7/15	7	7
Joint Standards Complaints Committee	6/7/15	6	7

3.0 Learning for 2019

3.1 It has always been intended to survey councillors following this training to see what could be improved for the 2019 Election Induction and to seek views on what other training councillors would be interested in. For a variety of reasons this survey has only just been undertaken, and it is hoped to report preliminary results at the Committee.

3.2 It was originally intended that the information presentation for new councillors should start at the point of provision of information to candidates. Although the emphasis at this stage was to be on how to get nominated correctly and what to expect on election night, it was also planned to include some very basic information on what councils have responsibility for locally, and how they are run, so candidates are prepared for taking up their positions if elected. It was planned that this information would include an overview/diary of the Induction Training Programme for ENC Candidates. For a variety of reasons this information was not passed to candidates, which meant that many of those elected were not told of the training dates until after they were elected. This impacted on attendance as some people who were elected as Councillors had booked holidays or had other commitments in the period immediately after the elections.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 The key implications of councillors not being familiar with the council's activities and the legislative framework in which it operates are that they may require significant support to understand decisions at a later stage, may provide incorrect information to constituents and, more importantly, may not understand their role and what should be considered when making decision in council meetings. In extreme cases this may result in the decision being judicially reviewed, which can have significant cost implications for the council. Training for regulatory committees is therefore considered very important. No councillor is able to sit on Licensing Panels or Planning Management Committee without attending relevant training. Update training is also provided for councillors in these two areas in addition to the Induction training noted in this report.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

7.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising from the report. There is a budget for further member training identified as a result of the survey.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 The report does not require any amendment to the Council's Constitution.

9.0 Customer Service Implications

9.1 There are no customer service implications arising from the report.


10.0 Corporate Outcomes

10.1 Training for councillors is a key activity linking to the Corporate Outcomes of Effective Management (legal compliance) and Councillors and Staff with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and note that a further report will be brought to the Committee when the final outcome of the survey is known.

[Reason: To enable the council to continue to improve the knowledge and skills of councillors]

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 1972 and other legislation.				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers:	None				
Person Originating Report:	Sharn Matthews, Executive Director and Monitoring Officer, ☎ 01832 742108 ✉ smatthews@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk				
Date: 22nd August 2016					
CFO 23/8/16		MO		CX	