

Report sponsor: Strategic Director of Corporate Resources  
Report author: Head of Democracy

## **Councillor Induction and Training 2023**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 This report intends to set a programme for councillor induction and training for the next municipal year, and seeks cross-party support to ensure maximum attendance from all councillors who are elected in May.
- 1.2 The change to the Council's electoral cycle provides an opportunity to review how councillor training and development is conducted. In addition, it is likely that the new cohort of councillors elected in May 2023 will include those who have no prior experience of local government. It is imperative that they are provided with a comprehensive induction process that allows them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles from the outset.
- 1.3 A draft training programme is attached at Appendix 1, detailing a range of induction training, essential training for all councillors and specialist training required to undertake constitutional roles or committee appointments.
- 1.4 The report also intends to establish the training that is considered by the Full Council to be mandatory and notes that from May 2023 onwards attendance at training will be routinely published on the Council's Democracy Portal.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree that the Councillor Induction Evening will be held on Tuesday 16 May 2023 and that the Councillor Training Day will be held on Monday 5 June 2023.
- 2.2 To support and endorse the programme of induction and training attached at Appendix 1, subject to finalisation by the Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services in consultation with Group Leaders.
- 2.3 To agree that political groups will widely communicate these dates to candidates standing in the Local Elections on 4 May 2023 and endorse an expectation that all councillors will attend.

### **Reasons**

- 3.1 Ensuring full attendance at training events ensures councillors are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their constitutional duties.

- 3.2 The draft training schedule attached at Appendix 1 is designed with the intention of ensuring a high level of training compliance. Induction training will focus on key knowledge required by newly elected councillors; the Councillor Training Day will provide an opportunity for councillors to undertake all mandatory training at once; and, the Councillor Training Evenings will cover advisory training over the course of the municipal year.

## **Supporting information**

- 4.3 Councillor Inductions have typically taken place in the week following the local elections, with newly elected councillors receiving an administrative induction and basic training in a single evening. It will not be possible to replicate this form of induction for a whole Council election. It is therefore recommended that the induction of new councillors takes place in several stages in the three weeks preceding the Annual General Meeting (see paragraph 3.7).
- 4.4 The Council adopted a modular format for Councillor Training in 2019, providing an opportunity for all mandatory training to take place on a single day. In 2021 and 2022, councillor training was delivered remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic; whilst attendance remained high, feedback has suggested that online sessions were less interactive and engaging. It is proposed that an in-person Councillor Training Day is reintroduced in June 2023, as the most effective means of delivering essential training to all councillors.
- 4.5 The adoption of a four-year electoral cycle provides an opportunity to plan councillor training and development over a longer period. The re-introduction of Councillor Training evenings throughout the municipal year will allow for training needs to be addressed as they arise.
- 4.6 The draft schedule of induction and training attached at Appendix 1 has been developed by Democratic Services in consultation with the Council's Senior Leadership Team and officers in relevant services across Derby City Council. It is intended to ensure councillors are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to discharge their duties safely and effectively. The content is summarised in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9 below.

### **4.7 Induction Training**

Newly elected councillors will be invited to book an appointment on either Wednesday 10 or Thursday 11 May to attend the Council House and undertake a basic induction covering the set-up of IT accounts, Council House access, fire safety and the collection of other administrative information.

A Councillor Induction evening will take place in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 16 May and will cover the following areas:

- Welcome from the Council's Senior Leadership Team
- Code of Conduct and Working Together – essentials
- Personal Safety for Councillors - essentials
- Introduction to Democratic Services

The following advisory sessions will be held online prior to the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 24 May:

- Council, Democracy and Decision-Making – a guide to the Municipal Year
- Introduction to using the Democracy Portal – accessing reports and information
- Introduction to using the Councillor Portal – raising casework with the Council
- IT Essentials – online meetings, telephony and using council systems
- Annual General Meeting – procedures and protocols

#### **4.8 Councillor Training Day**

The annual Councillor Training Day will take place on Monday 5 June 2023. The following areas have previously been identified as mandatory for all councillors:

- Decision-making, deliberations, and determinations
- Children's Safeguarding
- Adult Safeguarding
- Code of Conduct and the Councillor/Officer Protocol
- Introduction to Corporate Parenting
- Data Protection and Information Governance

Further advisory online sessions covering the following areas will be held throughout June 2023; they are intended for all councillors and not solely those appointed to particular committees:

- Introduction to Planning
- Introduction to Licensing
- Audit, Financial Scrutiny and Local Government Finance
- Executive Decision Making and Scrutiny Skills
- The Role of the Chair
- Introduction to Derby Homes

#### **4.9 Councillor Briefings and Training Evenings**

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council has hosted bi-monthly online Councillor Briefings. From June 2023 onwards, it is proposed that these sessions are held monthly, alternating between briefings and sessions to cover training requirements that arise throughout the year. The following subject areas have been tentatively identified:

- Personal Safety for Councillors
- Community Engagement and Locality Working
- Understanding Equalities
- Understanding the Climate Emergency
- Online engagement and safely using social media
- Housing and Homelessness

- 4.10 Further committee specific training and development will be undertaken by members appointed to regulatory committees and the Audit and Governance Committee. The training will be delivered by subject-experts in the Planning, Licensing, Finance and Internal Audit departments, and will be centrally recorded in a database maintained by Democratic Services.

- 4.11 The CMIS software that hosts the Democracy Portal allows for councillor training records to be published. It is in the public interest that attendance at training sessions identified by the Full Council as being mandatory are routinely disclosed.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 The draft training schedule was initially circulated to several Council departments that work directly with councillors, who were asked to identify areas where they felt that training was necessary. Group Leaders were consulted on the content of the draft training schedule between 9 and 16 February 2023.
- 5.2 Previous feedback from councillors and relevant officers has supported the modular format, noting the convenience of holding all mandatory training on a single day.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 To conduct ad-hoc training throughout the municipal year. Although effective, this training can prove time consuming for officers to organise and councillors to attend, often covering similar topics and rarely achieving full attendance.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 It is proposed that all training sessions are delivered in-house. Any costs associated with delivering the training programme would be less than the equivalent costs of commissioning external training or administering training on an ad-hoc basis.

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 There is no statutory requirement to provide councillor training, but failure to do so may lead to unnecessary risk and challenge to decision-making.
- 8.2 Council has previously endorsed annual programmes of councillor training, whilst individual committees have also made commitments to receive annual training.

### **Climate implications**

- 9.1 Appropriate training will allow councillors to make well-informed decisions relating to the Council's commitments in relation to the Climate Emergency.

### **Socio-Economic implications**

- 10.1 Appropriate training will allow councillors to effectively fulfil the Council's obligations in relation to the Socio-Economic Duty.

### **Other significant implications**

- 11.1 Failure to deliver appropriate training to councillors will harm the public's confidence in the Council as a democratic institution.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Emily Feenan, Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services	16 February 2023
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Simon Riley, Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	16 February 2023
<b>Other(s)</b>		
<b>Background papers:</b>	None	
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Draft Induction and Training Schedule 2023-24	