

Councillor Training and Development

Purpose

- 1.1 Full Council agrees a programme of mandatory and advisory training for councillors annually at its February meeting, for the forthcoming municipal year.
- 1.2 This report provides an opportunity for members of the Standards Committee to comment on the content of the training programme for the next municipal year, prior to its consideration by Council on 28 February 2024.
- 1.3 In particular, the committee is asked to consider any particular training requirements associated with the role and remit of the Standards Committee, either for all councillors or members of the committee.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the Councillor Training and Development Programme for 2023-24 attached at Appendix 1 and to make recommendations on any amendments required for 2024-25.
- 2.2 To review training requirements for councillors in relation to the Code of Conduct and to consider any specific training that may be required for members of the Standards Committee.

Reason

- 3.1 To ensure councillors are appropriately trained to undertake their statutory and democratic duties as elected representatives to Derby City Council.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The Council sets its training programme for councillors annually, usually at the meeting held in February, for the forthcoming municipal year. The training programme agreed by Council for 2023-24 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 In years where an election is held, induction training takes place immediately following the election of councillors. A Councillor Training Day is held annually in June to deliver all mandatory training at a single opportunity. Whilst councillors are encouraged to attend all training opportunities provided to them, the topics that have previously been identified as mandatory are:

- Deliberations and Decision Making

- Children's Safeguarding
 - Adult's Safeguarding
 - Data Protection and Information Governance
 - Councillors' Code of Conduct
 - Introduction to Corporate Parenting
- 4.3 Additional mandatory training is arranged for members of the Planning Control Committee, Licensing Committee and Audit and Governance Committee throughout the municipal year.
- 4.4 Mandatory training is identified by officers based on the core skills required by councillors to discharge their legal duties effectively and the level of risk exposure to both the Council and individual councillors. Whilst the Council could consider extending the number of mandatory sessions, the level of resources required to ensure full compliance makes this impractical. Instead, councillors are strongly encouraged to attend a range of additional advisory sessions held throughout the year, as their particular training needs and constitutional appointments dictate.
- 4.5 The Council holds monthly Councillor Training and Development Evenings where additional sessions are delivered by subject experts, both internal and external to the Council. Areas covered during the 2023-24 municipal year were:
- Introduction to Derby Museums Trust (July 2023)
 - Introduction to Housing and Homelessness (August 2023)
 - Understanding Equalities (September 2023)
 - Understanding the Climate Emergency (November 2023)
 - Elections Act 2020 Provisions (December 2023)
 - Risk and Assurance (January 2024)
 - Effective Councillor / Officer Relations (scheduled for February 2024 and to be delivered by the Local Government Association)
 - Online engagement and social media (scheduled for March 2024)
 - Scrutiny Skills and Accessing Information (date to be confirmed)
- 4.6 In February 2023, Council resolved that attendance at scheduled training was to be reported via the Democracy Portal annually. Training records for 2023-24 will be uploaded shortly following the end of the municipal year.
- 4.7 Whilst training in relation to the Code of Conduct is a mandatory element of the annual Councillor Training Day and forms part of the councillor induction process, no additional training is currently offered on broader issues relating to standards and probity in public life. Moreover, at present no specific training is offered to members of the Standards Committee in relation to its role in the oversight of the complaints procedure or its broader remit to uphold high standards of conduct and behaviour across the Council.
- 4.8 In January 2019, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) issued its most recent report on [Local government ethical standards](#). Within the report the CSPL stressed the importance of training as a means of reinforcing the importance of standards in public life and stated: 'training should not be dry or compliance focused but should set out the rationale for high standards in public life and should be scenario based so that councillors can engage with concrete examples and see the relevance of standards to different areas of activity in which they might be involved'.

- 4.9 This report provides an opportunity for the Standards Committee to consider whether additional training may be of benefit, either to all councillors or to members of the committee itself. In addition, the committee are encouraged to consider whether the format of existing training in relation to standards could be improved upon.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 This report provides an opportunity for early consultation with a cross-party group of councillors prior to the consideration of a training programme for 2024-25 at the meeting of Council scheduled for 28 February 2024.

Other options

- 6.1 None.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 Councillor training and development is delivered within a budget held by Democratic Services. The Medium Financial Term Financial Plan for 2023-24 reduced the resources available for councillor training. Where possible, training is delivered internally by subject-experts within the Council. In addition, the Council has access to free training resources via membership organisations such as the Local Government Association and East Midlands Councils. Free training opportunities are routinely reported to councillors via internal communications channels.

Legal implications

- 8.1 Failure to ensure councillors are appropriately trained increases the likelihood that decisions will be challenged, leading to aborted costs and reputational damage to the Council.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None directly arising.

Socio-Economic implications

- 10.1 None directly arising.

Other significant implications

- 11.1 None directly arising.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal Finance Service Director(s) Report sponsor	Emily Feenan, Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement	15 January 2024
Other(s)		

Background papers:	Committee on Standards in Public Life – Report on Local Government Ethical Standards, January 2019
List of appendices:	Appendix 1A – Report to Council, 27 February 2023: Councillor Induction and Training Programme 2023-24 Appendix 1B – Draft Induction and Training Programme 2023-24