

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

Councillor Training Day 2020

Purpose

- 1.2 This report intends to set a date for a Councillor Training Day 2020, and seeks cross-party support to ensure maximum attendance from both current councillors and any who are newly elected in May.
- 1.3 A new format for councillor training was adopted in 2019, which allowed for the majority of mandatory training requirements to be undertaken on a single day. This format replaced previous ad-hoc arrangements, whereby training was undertaken over a period of weeks following the annual meeting, often resulting in repetition of certain topics and difficulties ensuring full attendance.
- 1.4 An outline training programme is attached at Appendix 1, detailing a range of mandatory and optional modules, which can be tailored to individual councillors' particular constitutional appointments.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To support and endorse the date of Councillor Training Day on Wednesday 3 June 2020.
- 2.2 To agree that political groups will widely communicate this date to candidates standing in the Local Elections on 7 May, to ensure the date is set aside, and will endorse an expectation that all councillors will attend.
- 2.3 To endorse the modular training programme proposed at Appendix 1, subject to finalisation by the Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services, following further consultation with Group Leaders and the Councillor Steering Group.

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 modular training programme adopted in 2019 proved successful, ensuring a high level of training compliance, and it is intended to replicate this format in 2020.

Supporting information

- 4.1 Mirroring the format adopted in 2019, the training day will focus on a range of areas:
- Annual refresher training required for all councillors (for example safeguarding, and data protection);
 - Committee specific training (such as for regulatory or scrutiny committees);
 - General committee training (such as decision-making and chairing skills);
 - General refresher training on key issues (such as effective communication and equalities issues).
- 4.2 It is proposed that four mandatory training sessions will take place once throughout the day, which all councillors should attend. These remain unchanged from the previous years' programme and consist of the following modules:
- Children's Safeguarding (50 mins)
 - Adult's Safeguarding (50 mins)
 - Deliberations and Determinations (50 mins)
 - Data issues and updates (30 mins)
- 4.4 Six sessions will be rotated and repeated throughout the day on three occasions, allowing councillors the opportunity to choose which best match the requirements of the committees to which they are appointed. These are:
- Executive Decision Making (30 mins)
 - Scrutiny Questioning and Skills (30 mins)
 - The Role of the Chair (30 mins)
 - Code of Conduct (30 mins)
 - Legal updates in Planning (30 mins)
 - Legal updates in Licensing (30 mins)
- 4.5 At Councillor Training Day 2019, the fourth rotation of optional training modules was less well attended. Moreover, both councillors and officers have previously requested that additional modules are included as part of any future training day.
- Three further optional modules are therefore proposed, to be included in the training programme. Councillors will be able to choose two out of three of the following:
- Audit and financial scrutiny (30 mins)
 - Effective communication and consultation (30 mins)
 - Understanding equalities (30 mins)
- 4.6 Support will be offered by colleagues in Democratic Services to assist councillors in choosing which sessions are most appropriate to their needs.
- 4.7 In addition to Councillor Training Day, an additional session for Planning Control Committee members is scheduled for Thursday 21 May 2019. This is required to allow councillors to determine applications at the first meeting of the municipal year, which is likely to be on Thursday 28 May.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Feedback was sought from both councillors and relevant officers immediately following the Councillor Training Day in 2019. The comments received were broadly positive, with councillors welcoming the modular format and the convenience of receiving all mandatory training on a single day.
- 5.2 The current Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee has previously requested that audit-specific training was included on the schedule for Councillor Training Day. Moreover, Council has previously strongly endorsed the importance of equalities training for councillors. Communications and consultation has also been added to the draft training programme at the request of officers in the relevant service area.
- 5.3 Following consultation with Councillor Steering Group in October 2019, it was recommended that the modular format should be retained.

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 None directly arising. It is proposed that all modules are delivered in-house and any costs associated with the training day would be less than the equivalent cost in officer time of arranging ad-hoc sessions.

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.

Council has previously endorsed annual programmes of councillor training, whilst individual committees have also made commitments to receive annual training.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Emily Feenan, Director of Legal Procurement and Democratic Services	15 November 2019
Report sponsor	Paul Simpson, Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	15 November 2019
Other(s)		

Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	None

Appendix 1

	Time	Chamber Foyer	Council Chamber	Joseph Wright Meeting Room	Sir Henry Royce Meeting Room
	8.30am-9.00am	Welcome tea and coffee			
All	9.00am-9.50am		Children's Safeguarding		
Modular Options	9.50am-10.20am		Executive Decision Making	Scrutiny Skills	The Role of the Chair
	10.20am-10.50am		Code of Conduct	Legal updates in Planning	Legal updates in Licensing
	10.50am-11.00am	Drinks break			
All	11.00am-11.50am		Deliberations & Determinations		
Modular Options	11.50am-12.20pm		Executive Decision Making	The Role of the Chair	Legal updates in Planning
	12.20pm-12.50pm		Code of Conduct	Scrutiny Skills	Legal updates in Licensing
	12.50pm-1.30pm	Lunch			
All	1.30pm-2.20pm		Adult's Safeguarding		
Modular Options	2.20pm-2.50pm		Executive Decision Making	Code of Conduct	Legal updates in Licensing
	2.50pm-3.20pm		Scrutiny Skills	The Role of the Chair	Legal updates in Planning
	3.20pm-3.30pm	Drinks break			
All	3.30pm-4.00pm		Data Updates		
Modular Options	4.00pm-4.30pm		Audit and financial scrutiny	Communications and Consultation	Understanding equalities
	4.30pm-5.00pm		Audit and financial scrutiny	Communications and Consultation	Understanding equalities