

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBER INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

### **Governance Committee – 26 February 2015**

Report of Chief Officer Legal and Governance

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

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**This report supports the Key Aim of effective management of council resources**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Fleming

**Contact Officer** Philippa Gibbs Ext. 7288

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**Recommendation to Governance Committee:** That Members note the progress made on arrangements for the New Members' Induction following the elections in May 2015

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**Reason for recommendation:** to ensure Members' are kept fully informed of arrangements for the post election induction process.

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### **Introduction and Background**

- 1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance gave a presentation to the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee outlining the plans for the 2015 Members' Induction process.
- 2 Following the elections in 2011 new Members were given a telephone help line whereby any questions or queries they may have could be answered via Democratic Services. It is planned to further extend and refine this facility by providing new Members with Chief Officer, contact details so that they can directly contact such senior staff who can then help them with any problem that they are encountering. This will be a personal service that can greatly establish and facilitate good working relationships.
- 3 Members of the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee suggested basic information that was important to Members included how to get into the Council Offices, how to help a local resident, how to contact Kent County Council, advice on writing emails to constituents and resources that are available to Members (such as the LGA).
- 4 In April 2011, an introductory information session was held for candidates. For 2015 it is planned to extend the pre-nomination stage to ensure that prospective candidates get a positive message about being a Councillor as well as setting out the varied demands that Members are subject to. At the introductory information

session useful documents will be supplied to aid their understanding with such documents being made available on the Council's website for reference purposes.

## **2015 Members Induction**

### Members Induction

- 5 The Members' Induction will take place on Monday 11 May 2015. As part of the Induction Process Members will be required to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office as well as their compliance with the Code of Conduct. Members will also be provided with Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DIP) Forms and Register of Non-Pecuniary Interest (NPI) Forms to complete and return to the Monitoring Officer. Copies of the Members' Handbook will be provided and Entacards will also be issued at this time and Members' will be told how their Entacards work.
- 6 Members will receive presentations from the Chief Officers which will provide an overview of the Council departments including a virtual tour of the Argyle Road Building This could also provide an opportunity for new Members to meet Service Managers and to familiarise themselves with the Council Offices.
- 7 A new element of the induction process that has been introduced for 2015 is a coach tour of Sevenoaks District which will include Dunbrik Whilst arrangements are still in their infancy, it is likely that this will take place in the first week following the election and is intended to give new Members an overview of the scale and different characteristics of the District.

### Members' Handbook and Survival Guide

- 8 Whilst the contents of the Members' Handbook will remain similar to the documents provided in 2011, for 2015, it has been suggested that the Members' Handbook and Survival Guide be presented in a ring binder. This will enable the pages to be updated with relative ease. An electronic copy will also be placed on the Members' Portal and will be regularly reviewed and updated.
- 9 A further suggestion that has been made is that, within their induction pack, Members are given information specific to their individual wards.

### Member Training

- 10 In 2011 a comprehensive training programme was developed for the month immediately following the election. Members received training in the following areas: Budget and Finance, Ethical Standards, Development Control, Licensing and Scrutiny. In addition to this Members also received a briefing about the IT Service.
- 11 For 2015 it is proposed that the Members training programme is further extended to include, such things as Chairing skills, Community engagement and the Voluntary Sector and Overarching Training on how things Work and How to Do it. It is important that Development Control and Licensing training is held as soon as possible after the election as the Council's Constitution states that Members can not take part in these Committees without relevant training.

- 12 During the 2015/16 municipal year the Licensing Partnership will organise 3 or 4 open morning/afternoon sessions in the Administration Team at Sevenoaks District Council. In addition to the mandatory training that each Licensing Committee member must undertake, before they can sit in, a hearing all Licensing Committee members will be invited to attend an open session. In summary Licensing will be offering the following:

Mandatory training for sitting on a hearing – essential for new members.

New Members are invited to sit in and observe a hearing prior to sitting on a panel.

There will be updates in Licensing training through the year (probably 3 per year).

3 or 4 open sessions to demonstrate the operation of the Administration Team for the Licensing Partnership.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

The cost of the Members' Induction and Training will be met from existing budgets.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

High standards lie at the root of the Council's activities and it is important that training is available to enable Member's to fulfil their role.

Paragraph 3.38 of Part 7 The Council's Constitution states that 'Members must not participate in decision making at meetings dealing with planning matters unless they have undertaken suitable training, including any training designated by the Cabinet as mandatory.

### Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

**Background Papers:** [Council's Constitution](#)

**Christine Nuttall**  
**Chief Officer for Legal and Governance**