

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>General Purposes Committee</b></p> <p>Monday, 10 January 2022</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan: Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Member Induction Programme 2022</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	(All Wards);

### **Executive Summary**

In preparation for the May 2022 local elections, the Council is preparing a Member Induction Programme for all Members (both new and returning).

The draft plan is undergoing extensive consultation with officers and Members and has been worked up in reference to plans at other London authorities.

The General Purposes Committee is asked to review the final draft plan as presented and to provide comment as necessary. The Committee is then asked to sign off the final draft plan and confirm whether it wishes to see the completed plan at its meeting in March.

### **Recommendations:**

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the report and attached final draft Induction Plan and propose any amendments as required.
2. Subject to recommendation 1, to agree the final draft Induction Plan.
3. Confirm whether the committee wishes to receive a further report at its meeting on 22 March.

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The General Purposes Committee has a role in determining a number of aspects of support to the democratic process including around elections and the constitution.

- 1.2 The Committee is also a forum for discussing related matters around support for Members such as the recent reports on Member Enquiries.
- 1.3 The Member Induction programme plays a vital part in ensuring that Members are able to undertake their roles under the constitution and it is therefore important to ensure that Members have signed off on the plans.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee are welcome to make any suggestions as to the content and nature of the Member Induction Programme.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Planning is well underway for the Member Induction Programme 2022, with a cross directorate working group set up to identify the areas that need to be covered. Councillors, officers and the Standards Advisory Committee are have also been consulted for their feedback and suggestions.

- 3.2 Key criteria for developing the plan include:

- Ensuring statutory requirements are met quickly.
- Giving directorates an opportunity to introduce themselves and their services to Members.
- Creating a timetable that provides information efficiently without overloading Members with too much information too early.
- Ensuring the exercise is valuable to Members and isn't just about the Council passing on data/information.
- Considering how new technology can help support the programme in ways that were not possible in 2018.

- 3.3 The key elements of the 2018 programme and current good practice around member induction will inform the programme for this year.

- 3.4 In general, feedback from 2018 was good and it is intended to use the 2018 plan as the basis for this year. The plan will though be updated and the following have already been highlighted as beneficial changes:

- Discussions and training with the London Member Development Network has highlighted that best practice is to not rush to include all the seminars and briefings in the first few weeks as it is very difficult for new Councillors to take in all that information so quickly. It is seen as much better to provide the absolute essentials straight away and then gradually work through the rest of the content over the next few months.
- New technology not available in 2018 means that it will now be possible to run briefings and seminars virtually through Teams rather

than always requiring attendance at the town hall. This should help to encourage attendance and better fit in with the Councillors' other commitments.

- The plan considers those sessions which would be relevant for co-opted Members.
- The introduction of sessions led by Members is being looked at, including an 'introduction to being a councillor' seminar run by experienced councillors as well as a 'meet the Mayor' opportunity for new Members to talk to the Mayor and gain a better understanding of how they engage with the Elected Mayor position.

### Covid-19 Pandemic

- 3.5 Any potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is being monitored but for the moment the plans work on the basis that key parts of the programme will be able to take place in person at the town hall.

### Preparing the plan / consultation

- 3.6 A cross-directorate working group of officers is leading the review of the Induction Plan. This groups is meeting regularly and is currently working through different aspects of the plan until everything is covered.
- 3.7 In addition, feedback has been sought from Member and reports are being presented to DLTs and CLT. CLT in particular play an important role in reviewing and signing off the Induction Plan.
- 3.8 Feedback from the Member Seminars and Standards Advisory Committee: a lot of useful feedback was provided at the Member seminars which will be incorporated into the final plan. Highlights include:
- Strong support for spacing out the seminar programme.
  - Important that some functional training (e.g. in how to submit Member Enquiries) is provided straight away.
  - Think about the information made available in advance of the election such as a rough guide to being a councillor. Think about expectation management.
  - Think about running basic 'how to' sessions early and then follow up with 'how to do it well' type sessions later. A session on Councillor safety should also be planned for early in the programme.
  - Ensure Public Health and Adult Services are properly covered.
  - Hybrid training may be the most useful option
  - How to best keep Members in touch with how services operate, maybe include 'shopfloor' visits to help them understand how services operate as opposed to just seeing outcomes.
  - Think about how to use Members to help present sessions.
- 3.9 Feedback from Directorates has been particularly useful in refreshing the series of seminars planned as the main part of the programme.

## Elements of the Induction Plan

3.10 The Induction Plan has a number of elements:

- Admin and setup – IDs cards, laptops, emails, website, forms, etc
- Statutory – Register of Interests, Code of Conduct, certain committee training, Acceptance of Office etc.
- Orientation and Introductions – welcome evening, meet CLT, Mayor etc
- Training and Seminars – the largest section involves the seminar programme and training on topics such as ICT and using the Member Enquiries portal.

3.11 The Appendix to this report sets out the current draft Induction plan covering the seminar programme and the main administrative actions required.

### Feedback and next steps

3.12 Having reviewed the content of this report and appendices, the Committee are asked to comment on the plans set out. The Committee could then choose to sign off the plan or ask for it to return for its March meeting.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A strong Member Induction programme is important in helping to ensure that Members from all communities and backgrounds are able to undertake their role effectively.
- 4.2 Specific training will also be included to help Members consider equalities issues whilst undertaking their roles including when taking decisions or dealing with constituents.

## **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There is a Best Value risk to the Council and a risk to its decision making and leadership capabilities if the Member Induction plan is not effectively.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 Any associated costs will be minimal and accommodated within existing budgets.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits local authorities to do anything which is calculated to facilitate the discharge of any of their functions. The matters referred to in this report comply with the above legislation.
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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- None

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Seminar Programme 2022

#### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A