

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2019

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ORGANISATION

INTERIM UPDATE REPORT ON MEMBER INDUCTION AND ICT SUPPORT TO MEMBERS

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

PURPOSE

This report provides an update to the Committee on Member Induction following the May 2019 Local Elections, in light of the recommendations of this Committee to Cabinet on:

- 25 February 2019;
- 11 April 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended to Committee for its consideration and recommendation to Cabinet:

1. To endorse the recommendations on Member Induction that have been implemented through the Member Induction Programme, through amendment to the Constitution in respect of the supply of paper to members and the creation of the MembersZone.
2. To endorse the ICT support to members that was implemented during May 2019 for newly elected members.
3. To endorse the recommendation that feedback will be sought from members on the implementation of the Member Induction Programme and the ongoing training programme and the results of this feedback will be provided to the Committee within 6 months.
4. To endorse the recommendation that an update on the level of member attendance at all training sessions will be made available to the Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following discussion early in the municipal year 2018/19, the Committee had agreed to set up a working group to address support for new and existing members, which split into three sub-groups covering:

- Member induction
- ICT Support to members; and
- Information exchange with members

The Member induction and ICT support for members sub-group completed their work and made recommendations to Cabinet in February and April 2019. The Information exchange with members sub-group has not yet been completed as its work on this is considered to be a broader piece of work however, the creation of the MembersZone will provide the platform to support the technological solution.

Member Induction

The following recommendations were made to Cabinet (February 2019):

1. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members would receive an updated list of officers and details of their responsibilities.
2. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members would receive an updated list of officers and details of their responsibilities.
3. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members would receive "First point" of contact details.
4. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members would receive "First point" of contact details.
5. Contact details of officers and information regarding how and who to escalate issues with would be circulated to all members in full at the start of the municipal year.
6. Updates from Cabinet members and senior officers highlighting key projects of the year, risks and challenges against their corporate plans would be presented to all members at the earliest opportunity post the Council's AGM.
7. Where scrutiny receives reports, papers must be updated with the latest information, including Cabinet papers as appendices.
8. The supply of paper to members be removed from the constitution and printed copies of reports to be administered on a case by case assessment.

To implement those recommendations, officers from HR, ICT and Democratic Services formed a 'Task and Finish' group in order to expedite those recommendations as quickly as possible. As a result of their work a detailed Member Induction and Ongoing Training Programme was provided to newly elected members when they signed their Acceptance of Office.

Further, as part of the Member Induction Programme, the 10 newly elected members were invited to attend a Welcome event which provided such members with an introduction to the Council's Vision and to key officers, including members of the Corporate Management Team as well as all Statutory Officers. This Welcome meeting also highlighted the key corporate priorities for the Council and provided the newly elected members with an overview of finance within Local Government.

MembersZone, a new intranet based resource for all members was launched on 15 May 2019. MembersZone provides information to members and details of all training and how to access other useful resources. It aims to improve officer/member communications through a user-friendly, content rich site. Also included on this site is the Key Officer Contact List, which was requested by the Committee.

The Constitution has been reviewed and an updated version agreed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2019, which has removed from the Constitution (at Schedule 14) the right for members to be supplied with paper.

All 10 newly elected Councillors were invited to attend a Local Government Association (LGA) Regional Event to provide support to newly elected Councillors. Furthermore the 10 newly elected Councillors were also invited to attend a tailored Data Protection and Freedom of Information Workshop.

There has been further training rolled out which all Councillors were invited to attend:

- planning
- licensing
- safeguarding

In terms of further developing relationships between officers and Councillors further informal sessions with members of CMT and their teams are planned.

There is also further training designed to help support members in their role which will be rolled out over the remainder of this Municipal Year.

ICT Support to members

The following recommendations were made to Cabinet (April 2019):

- A pool of five IT devices, which were fit for purpose, to be available for Councillors;
- Initial IT training to be made available to Councillors as soon as reasonably practicable after election, and by no later than the first full Council meeting of the new Municipal Year.

Arrangements were put in place to consult with any newly elected Councillors, without a Tamworth Borough Council device, on the type of device they preferred at a meeting with the Head of IT and Information Services, which took place for 3 of the 4 newly elected members on the day that they accepted their Office.

All 10 newly elected members were invited to attend a 'Techy' Session, in the week commencing 13 May 2019 (two separate sessions were run). At this session, any new IT devices were issued and an overview of the following was provided:

- How to log in to Tamworth Borough Council resources from a range of devices
- Information & Resources; Websites
- ModGov and how to access Council and committee meeting agendas and papers (including confidential reports)
- Training and ongoing support available
- ICT Policies

The 4 newly elected members, who did not already have a Tamworth Borough Council device, were issued with devices and given IT training before the first full Council meeting of the year.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Given the request from this Committee following consideration of the working group's recommendations and the Council discussion at the State of Tamworth debate meeting it was felt appropriate to implement the recommendations made.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Existing staff resources from Democratic Services, HR, ICT and across the Council have been utilised to support the implementation of the new Member Induction Programme and the ICT support to members.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

None.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The newly developed Member Induction Programme is completely adaptable in terms of time/pace, place and method of delivery as well as enabling officers the opportunity to provide additional support to members with specific needs.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

REPORT AUTHOR

Jo Hutchison, Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer
Ani Goodwin, Executive Director Organisation

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet, 25 February 2019
Report to Cabinet, 11 April 2019

APPENDICES

None