

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Councillor Jane James, Executive Member for Customer & Corporate Services

To: General Purposes – 24 November 2022

Author: Teresa Smith, Democratic Services Team Leader

Subject: Member Induction 2023

Purpose: This briefing paper sets out the suggested ideas for the Member induction 2023 to allow open discussion between Members and Officers.

Recommendation(s):

- 1) To approve the suggested ideas to allow Officers to begin preparations of the Member Induction Programme for delivery in May 2023

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 As part of next year's district election, Breckland Council would like the welcome that Members receive to be more reflective of the organisation it is today; modern, agile, people and community focussed, committed to learning and improving (through training and support). The Council wants all elected Members – regardless of their experience – to feel supported and confident in carrying out their role for the benefit of their community, and the district as a whole.

1.2 The proposed Member Induction Plan will cover three key election milestones:

- **Pre-election** – promotional prospective candidate
- **Formally elected** – pre-induction Breckland Council welcome pack
- **Post election**
 - Member Induction
 - Member Training (the first three months)

1.3 Pre-election

1.3.1 **Prospective Councillor Event** – In order to attract as wide a pool of prospective candidates as possible, officers are proposing to promote the well-established information sessions provided by Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC). This will avoid duplication of effort and enable the team to focus on launching an awareness campaign.

1.3.2 **PR campaign -The Council's awareness campaign** will be featured on its social and digital channels, including the Breckland Council website, signposting to relevant and useful resources – such as those offered by NALC and the Local Government Association – for those considering becoming a councillor.

1.4 Formally Elected – pre-induction Breckland Council welcome pack

1.4.1 The District and Parish Elections take place on 4 May 2023. Once the count has taken place (5 May), District Councillors will be formally elected as a Breckland Councillor.

- 1.4.2 On the day of the count, the District Councillor will formally sign the 'Declaration of Office' book with the Chief Executive and will also receive a 'Breckland Welcome Pack'.
- 1.4.3 It is proposed that the new welcome pack will **align more closely with the staff induction experience**, consisting of:
- 'Welcome' video from the Chief Executive (to be linked via QR code)
 - Breckland notebook
 - Breckland pen
 - Breckland Cares keyring
 - Lanyard (ready for ID card)
 - Postcards (*to include picture of 3-tier infographic*) – with QR codes directing Members to the Breckland Council website to support their first days. This could include links to: Code of conduct, DPI forms.

1.5 Post election – Member Induction

- 1.5.1 As soon as practicably possible after the election, Members will be invited to attend a 'Welcome to Breckland' session at Elizabeth House – at a date to be agreed. This session will cover the following:
- Place – to include a tour of Elizabeth House, plus service 'market stalls'
 - Council – who we are, what we do, our place in the 3-tier system
 - How we work - #teambreckland, including Working Smarter
 - Corporate Plan & priorities
 - Achievements
 - Where the council money comes from – where it is spent
- 1.5.2 Members will also need to collect:
- ICT kit (new members only)
 - ID badges
- 1.5.3 A separate follow-up session will be held for Members that will cover:
- Governance
 - Code of Conduct
 - Allowances
 - How to access the agendas / minutes
 - Personal Safety
 - Agile working

1.6 Member training – the first 3 months

- 1.6.1 **Core training** – Within the first three months of their election, Members will be offered initial face-to-face training sessions that cover the core 'basics' of Breckland. These will be recorded for the benefit of all Members unable to attend in person; and for reference throughout their four-year tenure:
- Introduction to Planning
 - Introduction to Housing
 - Introduction to Communities
 - Introduction to Finance
 - Introduction to the iPad
 - o How it works
 - o Access mod.gov for agendas / minutes
 - o Access itrent for allowances

1.6.2 **Training Library** – Working with Members, Officers will develop a Training Library available on the Members' intranet page that will provide copies of presentations / links to legislation / how-to guides.

1.6.3 **E-Learning** - Links to – and promotion of - the LGA website for training (including the New Councillor Hub) will also be provided: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/councillor-development/councillor-e-learning>

1.7 There are the following additional options that are available for Members to consider:

1.7.1 **Mentoring** –Members may wish to consider whether they would like to be involved in offering mentoring to new councillors; a simple framework would be agreed for how the scheme would work, enabling Members to coordinate support for themselves.

1.7.2 **Training needs assessment questionnaire** – To make sure ongoing training and development needs are being suitably met, it is also proposed that the Council issues a questionnaire to all Members (suggest after 3months) to find out about their prior experience, their training preferences (eg: format and timings) and what they would like to receive training on. Appendix A provides the questions that will be asked in the questionnaire.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 Option 1 – to agree to the suggested ideas in the report

2.2 Option 2 – to agree alternative/additional ideas proposed at the meeting

2.3 Option 3 – Do nothing

3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 Providing a smooth and efficient induction programme for Members into the organisation will enable Members to effectively perform their duties as a Councillor within the District.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 The member induction programme will support Members to be the best they can be in their roles by providing appropriate support, development and training.

4.2 Providing an enhanced development programme will help to ensure the organisation is well-governed and democratically accountable.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 We will aim, where practicably possible, to offer hybrid/online training opportunities to avoid unnecessary journeys.

5.1.2 We will aim to make best use of IT and digital resources to reduce the amount of paper produced.

5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 Will share with members at early stage the corporate priorities and how their role as a councillor will link with these.

5.3 Financial

5.3.1 There is a Member Development budget of £7k which will support any ongoing external training required

5.4 Health & Wellbeing

5.4.1 The training programme in place will support Members during the initial stages of becoming a councillor.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 N/A

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 N/A

Background papers:- N/A

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Training Needs Assessment questionnaire