

POLICY, RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – MARCH 2023

COUNCILLOR ORIENTATION POST ELECTIONS 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The report introduces the training and orientation proposed for the new Council to be elected in May 2023.

As an outline the general topics would include:

- Civility and Respect
- Code of conduct and behaviour
- IT and electronic communications
- Dealing with misinformation
- Decision making as a Council
- Duties of parish councillors
- Safeguarding
- Council governance arrangements
- Handling the press/social media
- Planning
- Finance

Following the earlier visits around the Parish councillors confirmed that this was very useful and requested that it be repeated.

2.0 COUNCILLOR HANDBOOK

The handbook is available to all councillors via the website however some councillors do not have access to a computer and are able to request a hard copy of the information they require; alternatively they are able to visit the officer and will be able to use one of the computers on site. The handbook will be updated with the information requested by councillors.

3.0 ORIENTATION

The Council is a member of Hampshire Association of Local Councils and is able to access the training provided. Bespoke orientation and training tailored to the priorities and operations of the Council will be provided by the Clerk and Assistant Clerks however access to HALC courses remains open to councillors.

3.1 General Training

Using the Councillor's Handbook to provide the framework and background information it is proposed to provide the following sessions:

3.1.1 The Council

APPENDIX 11a

This will include:

- the structure of the Council and the local government landscape,
- the area of the Parish, the wards, and the other councillors
- where to find information about the Council
- who is who at the Parish Council and contact details,
- the assets of the Council and a site visit to places around the Parish

3.1.2 Meetings and Finance

This will include:

- the committees and groups within the Council
- the timetable of meetings
- how the Council sends out its agendas and summons the councillors (including an overview of the website)
- the statute and policies that set out how decisions are made and how the Council operates
- requirements on councillors as individuals eg Code of Conduct, Disclosures of Interest, safeguarding etc
- Evidence based decision making and case work, and dealing with misinformation

3.2 Bespoke session

Following the two sessions highlighted above and the bespoke 1 to 1 training covered in 4.0 it is proposed to offer a third session whereby the councillors nominate the subjects to be included.

3.3 Resources required

The approach set out in 3.1 to 3.2 can be provided by experienced councillors and the Clerk and Assistant Clerks.

4.0 BESPOKE 1 TO 1 TRAINING

Acting as a councillor in today's community requires a councillor to gain a considerable number of skills. Experience has demonstrated that bespoke training is on occasions required to enhance a councillor's understanding of Council operations and requirements on it and to equip a councillor to perform a specific function for the Council. Bespoke training can often be provided by officers using the resources available to the Council however on occasions it might require assistance from external parties eg a legal briefing. All councillors will be offered a 1 to 1 session with the Clerk and/or Assistant Clerk to introduce them to their IT and e mail provision. Ongoing 1 to 1 IT support will be available to all councillors.

5.0 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP ORIENTATION

Each committee and working group will provide orientation for new councillors. In the case of planning it is anticipated that the planning authorities will convene Parish Council Planning Training in a similar process as previous election years.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a. the Clerk develops and implements a councillor orientation programme based on the framework set out in this report;
- b. any resources required in addition to the budgets allocated are reported back to the Policy, Resources and Personnel Committee for consideration.

For further information contact:

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