

Councillor Induction Programme 2015 and Future IT Proposals for Councillors

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1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report is submitted for District Executive to seek members' approval of the Member Induction programme for 2015 and to agree their future IT requirements.

2. Forward Plan

2.1 This report appeared on the Executive Forward Plan for presentation in February 2015 to allow the necessary arrangements to be put in place for May 2015.

3. Public Interest

3.1 South Somerset District Council provides its councillors with the tools and learning experiences they need to successfully communicate with their community and assist the council with its corporate aims. This report sets out how we intend to provide both newly elected and returning members with the necessary skills, equipment and information to allow them to carry out their role as elected representatives.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The District Executive is asked to:-

1. comment on and approve the Member Induction Programme attached at Appendix A to this report;
2. agree that from May 2015, Members be offered a one off sum of £320 to purchase an internet enabled device (tablet or laptop) of their choice to enable them to access their SSDC emails, agendas and minutes and the internet in order to conduct their SSDC business;
3. agree that with effect from 1 May 2015 Members will be encouraged to receive their meeting papers and other circulated documents digitally through the Mod.Gov app;
4. delegate the necessary changes to be made to Part 6 (Members Allowances Scheme) of the Council's Constitution to the Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services).

5. Councillor Induction Programme 2015

5.1 Since the last elections in 2011, South Somerset District Councillors have taken advantage of a comprehensive range of training and development opportunities – beginning with the Member Induction Programme.

5.2 Through the attached Member Induction Programme, the Democratic Services team has again sought to ensure that any councillor newly elected in May 2015 will be provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to begin to meet the challenges of being an elected member in South Somerset.

5.3 The programme has been compiled in consultation with officers and a small group of councillors who provided their opinions on the last induction programme and suggested improvements for 2015. As a result, the programme is now spread over a period of six weeks with specialist external training during June and July in Data Protection, Questioning Skills, Making Social Media work for Councillors and Debating Skills and Public Speaking.

5.4 The programme now covers the following sessions:

- About the Council
- The Councils Constitution – Ethics and Probity
- Local Government Finance and Audit
- Introduction to Development Control for new councillors
- Using the Council Website and Email
- Licensing training (for all Licensing Committee members)
- Meeting with Chief Executive and Leader
- An introduction to SSDC Services
- Performance Management
- Data Protection for Councillors
- Press and media awareness; how to deal with the press
- Developing your Questioning Skills
- Making Social Media work for Councillors
- Debating Skills and Public Speaking
- Speed Reading

5.5 The majority of the sessions are offered twice, both during the day and evening to ensure maximum Members attendance.

6. Future IT Proposals for Councillors

6.1 At the last District Council elections in 2011, Members were offered SSDC owned laptop computers to enable them to access their Council emails. Since then, technology has advanced and the use of mobile devices to access the internet and emails are commonplace. Because of the wide variety of devices available, it is proposed to offer a one off sum of £320 to each newly elected Member to purchase a device which they are comfortable to use to include associated running costs. This could be a laptop computer or tablet device capable of fulfilling the Statement of Requirement for Councillors IT as detailed at Appendix B

6.2 It is also recognised that many of our existing Members use their own IT equipment, including printing and ink, and so the £320 will also be offered to them in acknowledgement of this.

6.3 Re-elected Members currently using SSDC issued equipment will be offered the opportunity to purchase it for private use for a nominal sum of £50 if they wish, however, the equipment will no longer be supported by SSDC IT staff. Otherwise, this equipment should be returned to SSDC for recycling after 7th May 2015.

6.4 The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 comes into force on 30th January 2015 which amends Schedule 12 to the Local

Government Act 1972, enabling Councils where a member has given consent, to send Agendas and Minutes in an electronic form.

6.5 From May 2015, Members will be encouraged to operate within a paperless system receiving, viewing and managing agenda papers and other circulated documents digitally.

6.6 Democratic Services recently implemented Modern.Gov software which is the leading committee decisions management system. This software includes a tablet app (for both android and IOS) which downloads meeting papers for committees and automatically keeps updated with all the latest meeting papers including the full agenda pack. The app is primarily aimed at Members and allows them to highlight sections of the pack and make annotations just as they would with a paper copy. Document navigation is made quick and simple via bookmarking and intuitive controls.

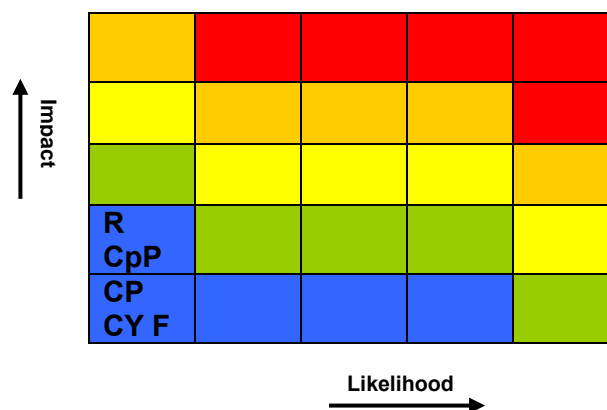
6.7 It is anticipated that Democratic Services staff will conduct one to one training on the Modern.Gov app to enable Members to access minutes and agendas electronically and so reduce the volume of paper agendas and minutes in the future.

6.8 It should be noted that whilst the Councils IT staff are always willing to help Members with their IT issues, they cannot be expected to be familiar with every device available on the market and in such circumstances they will do their best endeavours to assist with any issues. At the time of purchase, Members are recommended to ensure that they have their own satisfactory support arrangements in place.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The Member Induction Programme can be delivered from within the existing Member Training budget. The offer of £320 per Member towards their IT provision will cost £19,200 if taken up by all Councillors. This will be funded from the Democratic Representation budget and savings within the Printing and Stationery budget.

8. Risk Matrix



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	

	Blue	=	Insignificant impact and insignificant probability
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9. Implications for Corporate Priorities

9.1 The provision of development and support for members is essential in helping the Council to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan.

10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

10.1 If any course raises councillor awareness of carbon and climate change issues it could have an impact on future decisions made by councillors and therefore the effectiveness of the council's dealing with these issues. For external training courses councillors are always recommended to car share when possible or use public transport. By encouraging Members to receive meeting papers and other circulated documents digitally we will reduce the amount of paper used and printing costs within the District Council.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 South Somerset District Council is committed to taking effective active action to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all that it does with regards to offering learning and development opportunities to councillors. We believe that all councillors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and we are determined to ensure that councillors receive fair and equitable treatment.

12. Privacy Impact Assessment

12.1 Two Data Protection training sessions for Councillors have been arranged which will raise their awareness of personal data collection, use, storage, disclosure and disposal.

13. Background Papers

13.1 Member Induction Programme Report 2011 – District Executive in March 2011.

13.2 The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015.