

# Policy on Councillor Training and Development

## Purpose

1. To ensure that all elected councillors are equipped with the basic skills, knowledge and resources they need to perform their duties and responsibilities as a councillor during their term of office.

## Principles

2. Councillor training and development will be based on the following principles:
  - i. An induction for new councillors and essential training for all councillors will be treated as compulsory.
  - ii. Additional training and development opportunities will be offered to equip councillors for their particular duties and responsibilities.
  - iii. Induction and training will be offered on a range of dates and times, online and in-person.
  - iv. Presenters will strive to ensure that training is interactive, engaging and caters for a range of learning styles.
  - v. Feedback from councillors will inform the content and delivery of induction and training sessions.

## Induction and training

3. Welcome sessions for new councillors will be held after Oxfordshire County Council elections and before the first meeting of the new Council. They will be followed by a programme of induction training to equip new councillors with the skills and knowledge they need for their term of office as a councillor.
4. New councillors will be expected to complete all elements of the induction programme by the end of July in the year in which they are elected unless the Director of Law and Governance agrees that special circumstances apply.
5. Returning councillors will, as a minimum, arrange to sign their oath of office prior to the Annual Council meeting and may attend an initial induction session should they wish to do so. Returning councillors will also be encouraged to attend the induction training, particularly where they have not previously attended training on the topics covered.

## Compulsory training

6. Training on the Code of Conduct will be compulsory for all councillors upon their (re)elections and subsequently on a biennial basis.
7. Training on planning will be compulsory for councillors on the Planning & Regulation Committee. Councillors who have not attended the compulsory planning training will be barred from sitting on the Planning & Regulation Committee as members or substitute members until they have

done so.

8. The training requirements decided by the Pension Fund Committee will be compulsory for members and substitute members of that committee.
9. Councillors who take part in the recruitment process must have completed the Council's recruitment and selection training or be trained to the satisfaction of the Director of HR and Cultural Change.
10. Compulsory training may be required more frequently where there are changes to policy, legislation or Government guidance and the Director of Law and Governance determines that training on such changes is necessary and cannot wait until the next scheduled training on that topic.
11. Councillors elected in by-elections held separately from County Council elections will be offered an initial induction session and compulsory training on the Code of Conduct as well as for the Planning & Regulation Committee and the Pension Fund Committee where appropriate.

## Overview

12. An overview of the timing and indicative content of the induction and training is set out in Table 1. In addition, the Council will seek to respond to any new or emerging training needs that are identified (e.g. from councillor feedback) over the period of this scheme where resources allow.

**Table 1: Indicative timing and content of induction and training**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Timings</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Induction welcome day	In the week after the election.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting directors</li> <li>• Introduction to Council structures and key functions</li> <li>• Outline of training programme</li> <li>• Introduction to key issues facing the Council</li> <li>• IT support</li> </ul>
Code of Conduct	Before the Annual Council meeting.	Compulsory for all councillors
Council Procedures	Before the Annual Council meeting.	
Planning training	Before the first Planning & Regulation Committee meeting	Compulsory for members and substitute members of the Planning & Regulation Committee

Pensions training	Before the first meeting of the Pension Fund Committee	Compulsory for members and substitute members of the Pension Fund Committee
Recruitment and selection training	Before the end of July	Compulsory for councillors who take part in the recruitment process.
Audit & Governance training	Before the first Audit & Governance Committee meeting	
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Before the end of July	
Localities (Bite size)	Before the end of July	
Public Sector Equality Duty	Before the end of July	
Budget setting and local government finance	Before the end of July	
Corporate Parenting	Before the end of July	
Safeguarding	Before the end of July	
Cybersecurity/Phishing scams	Before the end of July	
Data Protection /FOI /Access to Information	Before the end of July	
Risk and performance	Before the end of July	
Media/social media training	Before the end of July	

### **Additional training and development opportunities**

13. Additional skills based training opportunities will be made available to councillors to support them in their specific roles as a councillor. This will include training delivered in house by officers or external trainers. The focus of additional training and development will be informed by feedback from councillors on their development needs and priorities.
14. Subject to the allocation of budget and the agreement of their Group Leader, councillors may also access external training courses and events relevant to their special responsibilities or the reasonable learning and development of a councillor.

### **Further induction support and resources**

15. All newly elected councillors will be issued with a welcome pack including details of the induction programme, various forms for completion and essential information about the Council including its corporate priorities, senior management structure, committee remits, the Council companies and contact details for the various services.
16. All new councillors will be paired with a “buddy” from within the Democratic Services and Scrutiny teams who will provide general support through the induction process with reference to a checklist of items for new councillors to do or be aware of.
17. Councillors appointed to Cabinet for the first time will be paired with a

“buddy” from within the senior management team to support them in that role.

18. Democratic Services will maintain an online “resource library” with up to date information for councillors including training and briefing materials.

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