



COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND MENTORING FRAMEWORK

Document Review History:

Document Ref: DOC/COU

Status: Draft

Version: 1.0

Date of Approval:

Date of Next Review: September 2028

Version Control:

Version: 1.0

Details of amendment(s): New.

Purpose

This framework establishes a structured induction and mentoring programme to support newly elected and co-opted councillors. It aims to ensure councillors understand their legal responsibilities, governance arrangements, Council policies, procedures and expected standards of behaviour, while encouraging knowledge sharing between experienced and new members.

The programme supports the Council's commitment to:

- Welcoming new councillors to the team
 - Good governance.
 - Effective decision making.
 - The Civility and Respect Pledge.
 - Continuous improvement.
 - Positive working relationships between councillors and officers.

Objectives

The programme will:

- Provide every new councillor with a consistent induction.
- Help councillors become effective contributors more quickly.
- Promote a culture of openness, respect and professionalism.
- Improve understanding of legal powers, responsibilities and limitations.
- Encourage constructive challenge whilst maintaining collective responsibility.
- Reduce governance risks arising from lack of knowledge.
- Retain organisational knowledge through peer mentoring.

Principles

The programme is based upon the following principles:

Supportive rather than supervisory

The mentoring relationship is intended to provide encouragement, guidance and practical support. Mentors should help new councillors understand Council processes, procedures and responsibilities, whilst recognising that all councillors fulfil their role independently. Mentoring is not a performance management process and should not be used to direct, monitor or assess a councillor's views or decisions.

Confidential and non-political

Discussions between mentors and mentees should remain confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern, legal obligation to disclose information, or both parties agree otherwise. The mentoring relationship must remain politically neutral and focus on understanding governance and Council procedures rather than promoting individual opinions or preferred outcomes.

Focused on governance rather than opinion

The programme should develop knowledge of legislation, Council policies, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and good governance. Mentors should explain how decisions are made, the role of officers, committee structures and statutory responsibilities, rather than influencing a councillor's personal views on Council business.

Respectful of differing viewpoints

Councillors will inevitably hold differing opinions on matters before the Council. The mentoring programme should reinforce that respectful debate is an essential part of democratic decision making. Mentors should encourage constructive discussion, active listening and professional behaviour consistent with the Council's Code of Conduct, Civility and Respect Pledge, and Member-Officer Protocol.

Encouraging informed and evidence-based decision making by the Council

The programme should help councillors understand how well-reasoned decisions are reached collectively through lawful processes, professional advice, available evidence and consideration of the wider public interest. Mentors should encourage councillors to prepare for meetings, read reports thoroughly, ask appropriate questions and understand recommendations, recognising that decisions are made by the Council or its committees rather than individual councillors.

Consistent for all councillors

Every newly elected or co-opted councillor should receive the same core induction, access to key documents, mentoring support and training opportunities, ensuring fairness and consistency across the Council.

Promoting a Positive Council Culture

The programme should encourage behaviours that foster trust, openness and collaboration between councillors, officers and the community. Councillors should recognise their collective responsibility to support lawful decision making, treat others with courtesy and professionalism, and contribute to a culture where differing views can be expressed respectfully.

Councillor Mentor Role

A mentor should:

- Provide practical guidance and support.
- Explain Council processes and procedures.
- Help the councillor understand governance arrangements.
- Encourage attendance at relevant training.
- Share experience and organisational knowledge.
- Support understanding of meeting procedures and decision making.

A mentor should not:

- Influence how a councillor votes.
- Share confidential information.
- Replace advice from the clerk or Proper Officer.
- Act as a spokesperson for the councillor.
- Direct the councillor's opinions or views.

Structured Learning and Induction Programme

The induction programme provides a structured introduction to Council governance, procedures, policies and culture. The timetable may be adapted to meet individual learning needs whilst ensuring all councillors receive a consistent foundation of knowledge.

Appendix A – Councillor Induction Timetable and Checklist

Timeframe	Activity	Lead	Completed	Date	Initials
Before appointment	Provide prospective councillor information pack outlining the role, responsibilities, expected time commitment, committee structure, meeting schedule, Code of Conduct and Civility and Respect Pledge.	Clerk	☐		
Before appointment	Explain the role and responsibilities of a parish councillor.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Complete Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Complete Register of Interests.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Set up council email account and IT access.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Provide guidance on information security, cyber security and data protection responsibilities.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Introduce council officers and explain their respective roles and responsibilities.	Clerk	☐		
Within one week of appointment	Issue Councillor Induction Pack including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Councillor Handbook, Code of Conduct, committee terms of reference, Business Plan, budget and key policies.	Clerk	☐		
Within two weeks	Welcome meeting covering Council vision, strategic priorities, governance structure, committee responsibilities and current projects.	Chair and clerk	☐		
Within two weeks	Allocate a councillor mentor.	Chair	☐		
Within two weeks	Hold introductory mentor meeting and agree mentoring arrangements.	Mentor	☐		
Month One	Explain role of the Council, councillors, Chair, committees and officers.	Mentor	☐		
Month One	Explain statutory powers and duties.	Mentor	☐		
Month One	Explain governance versus operational management.	Mentor	☐		
Month One	Explain decision-making processes and meeting procedures.	Mentor	☐		

Month One	Explain agendas, reports and the role of the Proper Officer.	Mentor	☐		
Month Two	Review Standing Orders.	Mentor	☐		
Month Two	Review Financial Regulations.	Mentor	☐		
Month Two	Explain budget setting, precept, procurement, internal controls, audit and risk management.	Mentor/RFO	☐		
Month Three	Explain motions, amendments, voting procedures, declarations of interest and confidential business.	Mentor	☐		
Month Three	Attend committee meeting with mentor support where appropriate.	Mentor	☐		
Month Four	Explain planning process, project governance, working groups and community engagement.	Mentor	☐		
Month Four	Discuss effective decision making using officer reports, legislation and available evidence.	Mentor	☐		
Month Five	Review Code of Conduct, Civility and Respect Pledge and Member-Officer Protocol.	Mentor	☐		
Month Five	Discuss equality duties, biodiversity duty, communications and social media expectations.	Mentor	☐		
Month Five	Explain complaints procedures and standards arrangements.	Mentor	☐		
Month Six	Formal review of induction programme.	Chair, mentor and clerk	☐		
Month Six	Identify additional learning and development needs.	Chair, mentor and clerk	☐		
Month Six	Agree future training opportunities.	Chair, mentor and clerk	☐		
Ongoing	Attend relevant LALC, SLCC and other governance training.	Councillor	☐		
Ongoing	Participate in Council workshops and governance briefings.	Councillor	☐		
Ongoing	Meet mentor as required during first six months.	Mentor and councillor	☐		
Annually	Attend governance refresher training and review legislative and policy updates.	Clerk	☐		