



From mountain to sea

# **Elected Member Essential Information**

Critical information for your  
first weekend as a  
Councillor

November 2024



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## 1 Welcome

Congratulations on your election to serve your community as a member of Aberdeenshire Council.

You are about to embark on an induction programme to support your learning about the role of a Councillor, about the roles of officers and the support we can provide each other.

To complement the induction programme an online resource has also been designed for you which contains all the essential information that you will need to know in the first few weeks. You can find this at [induction.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://induction.aberdeenshire.gov.uk). The important dates for your diary can also be found below.

You are strongly encouraged to spend time going through the information on the induction site which should guide you through the first few weeks and provide detail about your role. The site can be accessed from any device, however some of the links' point to documents on the intranet or councillor ward pages, and as such these will only be accessible when you are using the site from a council laptop. You are also strongly encouraged to complete the recommended online training.

There are also a number of forms that you need to complete and return and a checklist can be found at the end of this booklet which will help you ensure you complete all the necessary tasks.

If you have any questions or require any further information Council officers will be on hand to offer you advice and assistance if you require it.

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## Key Information

- You should attend **Woodhill House** in Aberdeen on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024** for a Familiarisation Day. Please arrive for a 9am start.
- Please familiarise yourself with the **Councillors Code of Conduct** as soon as possible as this document outlines the duties you have as a Councillor
- Please note the content of the **induction programme** and list of **online courses** in the checklist at the end of this document that you will be expected to complete
- Please **respond to any request for information** as quickly as possible to ensure that we can support you in your new role
- In the meantime you can obtain further information on Aberdeenshire Council and your role as a Councillor at **[induction.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](https://induction.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)** which can be accessed from any device.





## 2 Familiarisation Day

**When** – Monday 11th November 2024

**Time** – 9.00am

**Where** – Members Building – Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen,  
AB16 5GB

You are invited to a Familiarisation session at Woodhill House.

The day will be a mixture of time spent with officers and with elected members as part of group meetings where relevant. This will give you networking opportunities in the morning as well as a welcome and introduction to the Council by Jim Savege, the Chief Executive.

The afternoon session focusses on providing you with the immediate, need to know information for your new role. This includes providing you with the tools that will form the basis on which everything else will be built. This session is **essential** however if you are unable to attend, please get in touch with [memberssupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:memberssupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) to let us know. There will be sessions with colleagues from Legal and People and Planning.

You will be able to purchase your lunch in the canteen at Woodhill House, contactless payment and cash are both accepted. Please bring a reusable water bottle with you.

You will be given your ID badge before you leave Woodhill for the day therefore please bring a form of photographic identification with you which will be checked when you check in at reception.

### 2.1 Employment documentation and checks

The Resourcing Team will email you from on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to discuss the checks that are required, e.g. Right to Work in the UK, ID to support a Basic Disclosure Scotland check and Basic Disclosure application form. Please respond to the email as soon as possible.

### 2.2 Payroll

Pay day is on the second last working day of each month.

A representative from the Payroll team email you with a Bank Mandate Form. To ensure payment please respond to this as quickly as possible.

### 2.3 Pensions

New Councillors will automatically be enrolled in the North East Scotland Pension Fund if aged under 75 (unless you contact NESPF to advice that you wish to opt out). Their contact details are [www.nespf.org.uk](http://www.nespf.org.uk)

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## 2.4 Travel Expenses

Travel and Expenses Claims must be submitted online via your Employee Self Service account (ESS) by the 14th of the month. Guidance along with an online course with a step by step instructions will be emailed to you.

## 2.5 Learning and Development

ALDO (Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online) is our online training portal. Once logged in you can enroll in a range of training course. There is a dedicated section on ALDO containing essential councillor courses and other topics of interest. ALDO records your participation in all courses, so you can see at a glance what training you have completed. ALDO is a rich resource full of useful information and tips for councillors. The checklist at the end of this document contains a list of ALDO courses that you should complete within the first few weeks of joining the Council. **Please note that the Data Protection and FOI training is mandatory for all Councillors and must be completed.**

## 2.6 Register of Interests

You will be sent an email asking you to complete a register of interests. Please complete and return **no later than the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

You must list your interests for the period 12 months before your appointment to office (i.e. from November 2023). You should be aware that the form will be placed on a statutory Register of Interests and will be open to public scrutiny by being published on our website.

### **What needs to be registered?**

The rules on what should be registered are set out in Section 4 of the Councillors Code of Conduct. A copy of the code of Conduct is included within this Induction Pack and you can find further guidance on the Standards Commission website ([www.standardscommission.gov.uk](http://www.standardscommission.gov.uk)).

The categories which require registration include:-

- 1 – Remuneration
- 2 – Other roles – e.g. unremunerated directorships
- 3 – Contracts
- 4 – Election Expenses
- 5 – Houses, Land and Buildings
- 6 – Interest in Shares and Securities
- 7 – Gifts and Hospitality
- 8 – Non Financial Interests
- 9 – Interests of Close Family Members

Registration of Interests will be discussed during the familiarisation session and you can ask for registration advice by emailing [Lauren.Cowie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.Cowie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) if required.

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## 2.7 How to Find Woodhill House

Woodhill House in Aberdeen is the Aberdeenshire Council Headquarters.

The address is Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB.



**Where to park:** Enter through Westburn Road entrance and the councillor carpark is the first on the left.

**Where to report:** Through the Member entrance, again the first entrance (rotunda) off Westburn Road.

### 3 Governance Induction

**When** – Wednesday 13th November

**Time** – 10.00-12.30 pm

**Where** – Microsoft Teams

The Governance Induction is an essential course for all Councillors. It will give you an overview of the structure of the Council, our decision making including the Code of Conduct and Equalities. We would strongly recommend you attend the session if you can. If you are unable to attend, please let us know so that we can reschedule.

The session will be held on Microsoft Teams.

### 4 Dates for your Diary

Electronic invitations will be sent to your Council email address for you to accept therefore please keep an eye out for these. The invitations will include access arrangements for the meetings. Invitations will just be sent to you for the Committees that you are appointed to.

#### 4.1 Formal Meeting Dates

##### 4.1.1 Full Council

Date	Location	Time
21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024	The Council Chamber, Woodhill House or Microsoft Teams	10.15am

##### 4.1.2 First Policy and Central Committee and Board Meetings

Committee/Board	Date	Time
Integration Joint Board	11th December 2024	10.00am
Infrastructure Services Committee	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	10.15am
Education and Children's Services	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	10.15am
Sustainability Committee	13th November 2024	10.15am
Communities Committee	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	10.15am
Aberdeenshire Licensing Board	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	10.15am
Business Services Committee	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	10.15am



Local Review Body	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	10.15am
Audit Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	10.15am
Licensing Sub-Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	10.15am

#### 4.1.2.1 Policy Committee Inductions

You will be invited to an Induction session for the Policy Committee that you are appointed to. These sessions are introductory sessions in advance of the meeting covering the Committee remit and business, key officers and statutory duties and will be open to all members.

#### 4.1.3 First Area Committee Dates

Committee	Date	Time
Buchan	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	10.00am
Garioch	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	09.30am
Kincardine and Mearns	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	09.30am
Formartine	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	09.45am
Marr	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	10.00am
Banff & Buchan	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	09.30am

- The Member for Ward 3 will sit on the Banff and Buchan Area Committee
- The Member for Ward 4 will sit on the Buchan Area Committee
- The Member for Ward 19 will sit on the Kincardine & Mearns Committee

## 4.2 Induction Programme

An induction programme has been developed to help settle you into your role at Aberdeenshire Council and to equip you with the knowledge that you will require to represent your constituents.

We have developed centralised corporate training (both live and through ALDO), area specific training you will receive invitations to some training sessions on various topics including finance, planning, good decision making, corporate parenting, performance, scrutiny and audit. We appreciate that there is a lot of information to absorb and all of the sessions will be recorded, where possible, and will be made available to you to watch when convenient if you are unable to attend the live sessions. There are a lot of online resources through our ALDO portal as described above as well as in the Induction Portal.

We would encourage you to engage with us and alert the organisers of the sessions know when you receive the invitation if you are able to attend or not so that we can reschedule to suit all three new members.

## 4.3 Area Committee Inductions

### Area Committee Inductions

Tuesdays are the day that is reserved for Area Committee business, whether a formal Committee or for informal Area Committee business. Your Area Manager will introduce you to the role of the Area Committee and the officers who will support you, including Committee powers, how meetings are run and opportunity to find out more about local networks and service delivery including meeting local service contacts and community planning partners

Invites and the full programme for your Area will be issued in due course.

The arrangements for **Tuesday the 12th November** are as follows:-

**Ward 3** - Banff and Buchan Area Committee informal business - an invite will be issued directly.

**Ward 4** - Buchan Area Committee - this is the formal meeting. An invite will be sent to you as well as the link for the agenda. If there are any papers that are marked as restricted or as exempt, please keep the contents confidential.

**Ward 19** - Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee informal business - an invite will be issued directly.

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## 5 Essential Planning Information

Planning is the process of managing the development of land and buildings in the long-term public interest. You will be given comprehensive planning training to assist you to fulfil your role as a Councillor.

You will be asked to take decisions on planning applications as a Councillor. In doing so, you must be wholly impartial, and seen to be impartial by the public, in carrying out this role. It is therefore crucial that you do not provide any view on any planning application that may come before you for a decision. From the day you are elected as a Councillor your constituents may seek to lobby you regarding planning applications. This may be in person, or via email. To ensure you do not inadvertently give any indications of support either for or against an application it is recommended that you set up an automated response to your emails using the following wording:-

*“Thank you for your e-mail. Please note, if your email relates to a Planning matter, I am not in a position to lend support for or against any planning application or other application that I may have to make a decision on in the future. I will not formulate an opinion on a particular matter until all available information is to hand and has been duly considered.”*

If you are not sure how to deal with matters relating to planning that are brought to you as an elected member, please contact both your local planning officer or the Monitoring Officer/Solicitor. It can be easier to refer the constituent to Officers for a reply than to try and deal with it yourself. Be careful what you say about pending applications in public or in the press as it could be construed to mean that you have declared your position on the application in advance.

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## 6 Councillors Code of Conduct

By signing the declaration accepting the office of councillor, you agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors. A copy of this is also included in this welcome pack. The Code of Conduct is a crucial document and essential reading for all councillors. Further training will be provided to you on the Code and its application. Advice and guidance can always be obtained from the Monitoring Officer (Karen Wiles, Head of Legal and People, [karen.wiles@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:karen.wiles@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or her Deputy Monitoring Officer (Lauren Cowie, Legal Service Manager (Governance) [lauren.cowie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.cowie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)).

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## 7 Councillor “To Do” Check List

- **Complete your Declaration of Acceptance Form** – this will be done at the Count Venue
- Return your **Register of Members Interests** form by **1<sup>st</sup> June 2022** to [committee.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Complete the **Basic Disclosure application form** which will be emailed to you following your election and provide ID documents to support application
- Provide any **Right to Work** in the UK documentation which may be required
- Submit your payroll information by **13th November 2024** to [payroll@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:payroll@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- Submit your **campaign spending return** by **13<sup>th</sup> December 2024** to the Returning Officer

### **ALDO courses**

*These courses can be found on the Council’s ALDO portal and you should complete them as soon as you can.*

- **GDPR** – this is a **mandatory** course which must be completed by **all Councillors**
  - **Equalities** – what does it mean for me?
  - **Respecting Diversity**
  - **Cyber Security**
  - **Scheme of Governance**
  - **Code of Conduct**
  - **PREVENT – Making a Difference**
  - **ACT – Action Counters Terrorism**
  - **SCAN, See, Check and Notify**
  - **How to Committee**
  - **Scrutiny**
  - **Lone Working for Councillors**
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